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Ajatshatru Kunik



AJATSHATRU KUNIK

Man's needs are very limited but his desires are unlimited. Even with all physical comforts at his command, he continues to be driven by ambitions. As a consequence he faces hardships and invites anguish, anxiety, and stress. When desires expand they become ambitions. The spark of ambition could be traced at the root of every war, bloodshed, murder, struggle, and conspiracy prevailing in the world. A man driven by ambition is devoid of feelings of religion, morality, love, fraternity and even normal human emotions.

The name of Ajatshatru Kunik, the son of King Shrenik Bimbsar of Magadh, finds mention in Indian history as a highly ambitious emperor who reigned some 2500 years back. He was highly impressed by the life and preaching of Bhagavan Mahavir. He even had a high degree of reverence for and faith in Bhagavan Mahavir. But the history he created under the overpowering drive of his unbridled desires presents him as a ruler with excessive imperialistic ambitions. In Jain literature he is mentioned as Ashokchandra Kunik and in Buddhist literature as Ajatshatru Kunik. Driven by his ambitions Ajatshatru fought wars against his own brothers and not only destroyed a divinely beautiful city like Vaishali but also colored it crimson with blood. For this dastardly deed Bhagavan Mahavir negated all his pretentious religious worship and made him aware of his next hellish life.

In this story incidents from the life of Ajatshatru have been compiled from various Jain sources. This biographical sketch inspires the reader to control his desires and ambitions.

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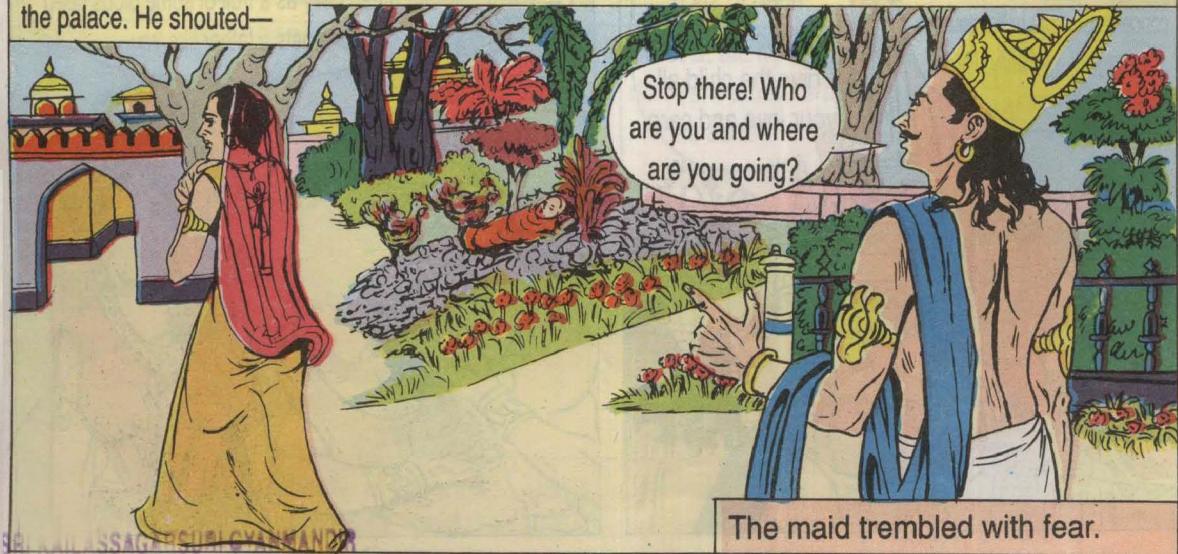
SHATRU KUNIK

Priyamvada! This child is ominous. In the form of a son he is the enemy of the King. Take him away and throw him on some distant garbage heap. I don't want to see his face.

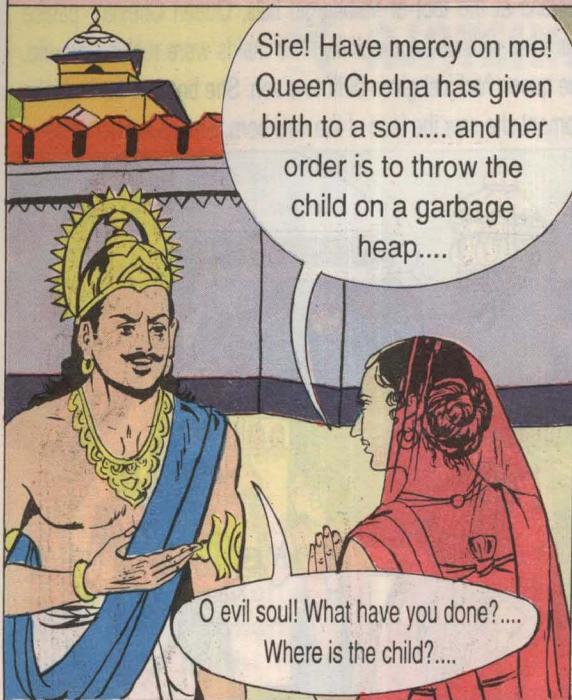
It was the last quarter of the night. Surrounded by beautiful gardens at the foot of Vaibhargiri hills, Queen Chelna's palace was filled with unusual activity. The maids were rushing around. The queen had just given birth to a son. She became nervous the moment she saw the face of the new born. She called her maid—



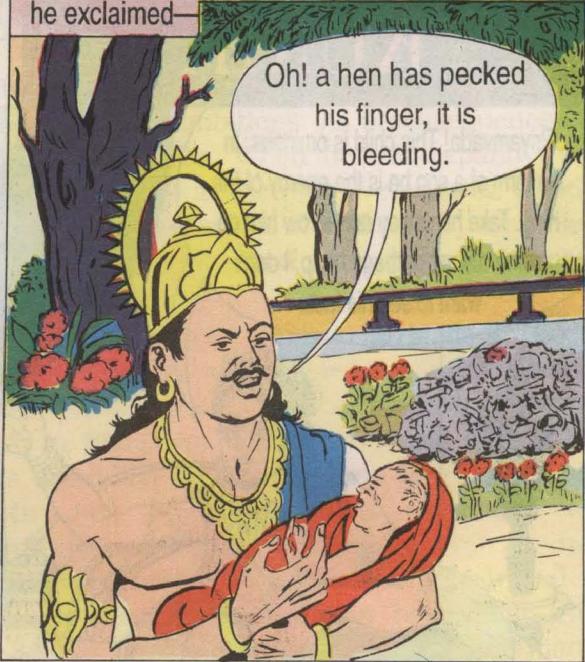
The maid followed the queen's instructions. She left the child on a garbage heap at the back of the palace. As she turned to leave, King Shrenik arrived there from his morning walk. He saw a woman furtively going toward the palace. He shouted—



On coming near, the king recognized the maid. When he reprimanded for her questionable behaviour, the nervous maid revealed the truth—



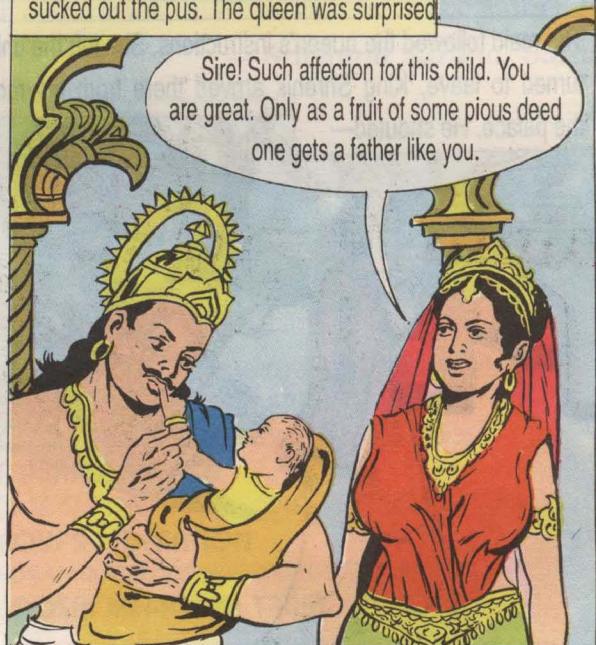
The maid took the king near the garbage heap. Shrenik rushed, picked up the infant and kissed him. When he saw the finger of the wailing child he exclaimed—



Shrenik took the child to Chelna's palace and questioned her about this cruel deed. The queen said in choked voice—



When Shrenik came to see his son a few days later, he found that the wounded finger had swollen with pus and the child was crying. He at once took the finger in his mouth and sucked out the pus. The queen was surprised.



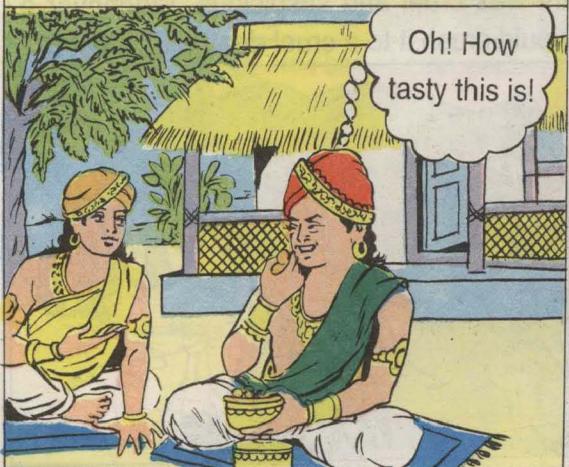
The child was named Ashok Chandra but due to his wounded finger every one called him Kunik[#]. After Kunik, Chelna gave birth to two other sons who were named Halla and Vihalla. When they grew up, the three princes were sent to a "Gurukul" school.



One afternoon three lunch-boxes full of saffron laddus^{##} were sent to the school. The servants first gave a box to Kunik and then to Halla and Vihalla. Kunik tasted his laddu—



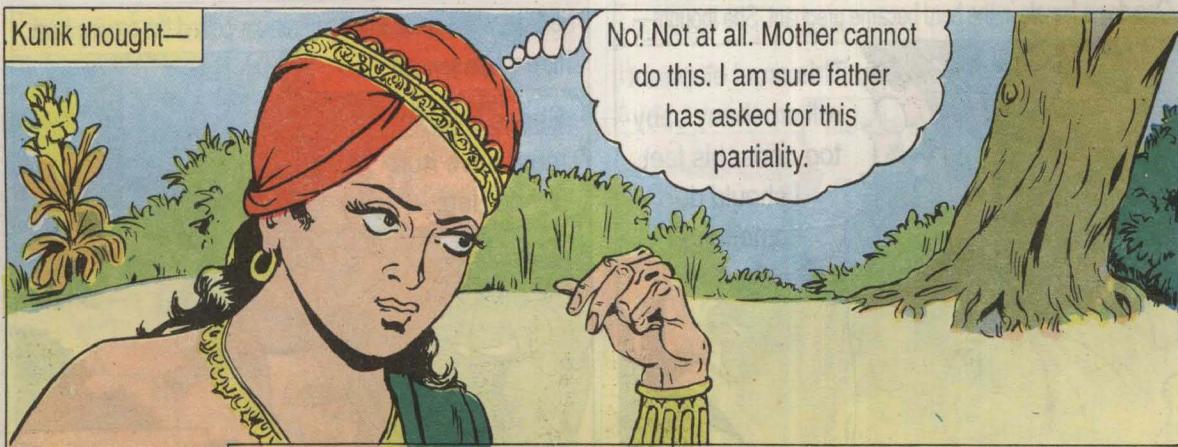
He tasted the sweets from his brothers' boxes.



When he found the same mistake next day also, he asked the servants—



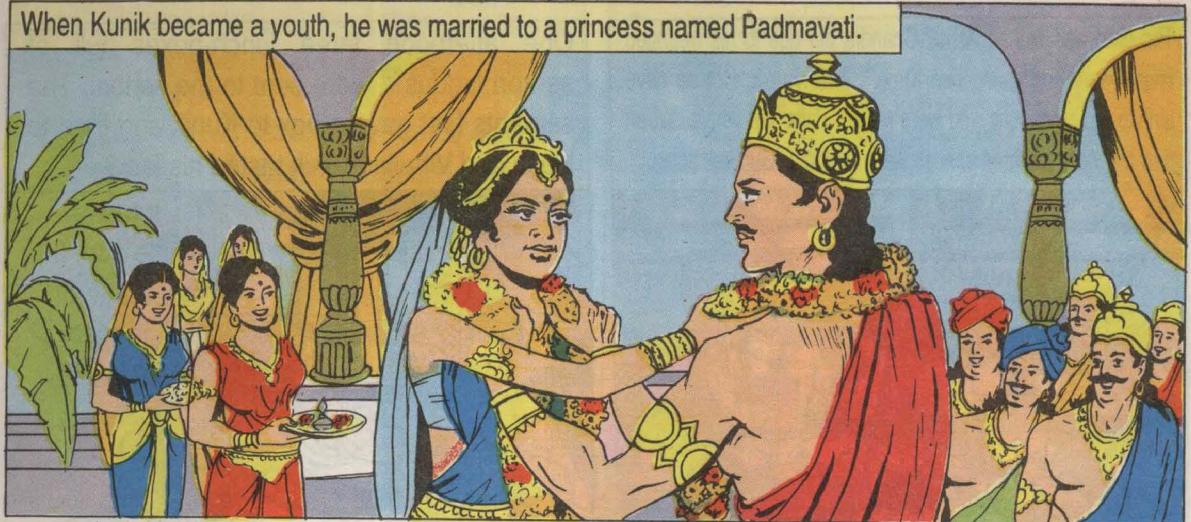
Kunik thought—



Gradually a feeling of dislike clouded Kunik's mind. Even in insignificant matters he felt as if his father hated him and loved his younger brothers.

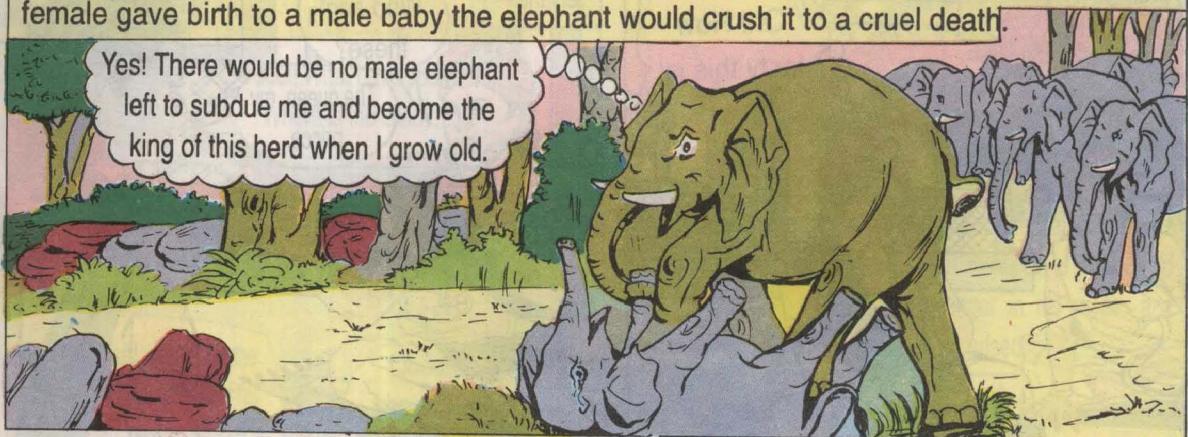
[#] Kunik = one with a cut finger.

When Kunik became a youth, he was married to a princess named Padmavati.



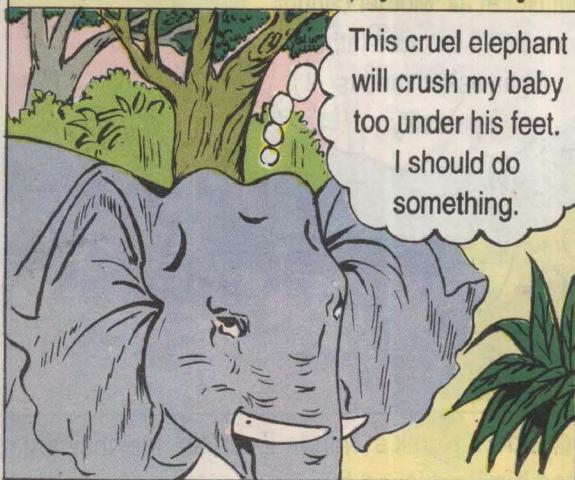
Near Rajagriha was a large forest where roamed a large herd of elephants. It had a larger percentage of she-elephants. The king-elephant was cruel and suspicious. Whenever a female gave birth to a male baby the elephant would crush it to a cruel death.

Yes! There would be no male elephant left to subdue me and become the king of this herd when I grow old.



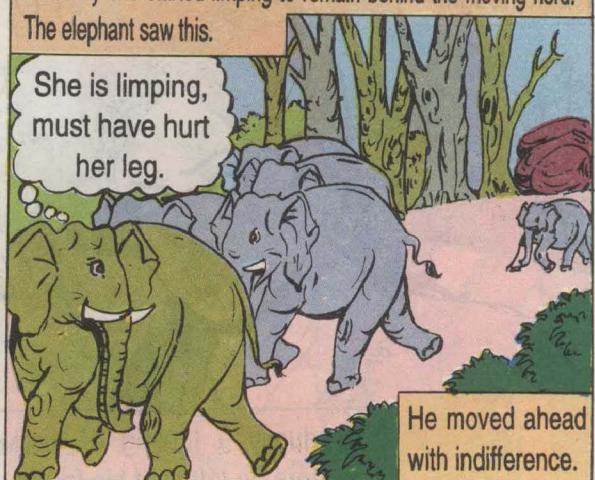
One day a female in the herd became pregnant. She thought—

This cruel elephant will crush my baby too under his feet. I should do something.



Next day she started limping to remain behind the moving herd. The elephant saw this.

She is limping, must have hurt her leg.



He moved ahead with indifference.

AJATSHATRU KUNIK

The pregnant female caught up with the herd after three days.
She explained to the elephant—

Lord! I have acute pain in my leg. I can't even move.

The elephant believed her and said—

All right. Rest here till you get relief.

And her distance with the herd increased.

The she-elephant came to a hermitage at the edge of the forest. Considering her to be sick, the hermits allowed her to remain there. At last she gave birth to a beautiful male baby.

How beautiful this elephant is !

A few days later she left the baby elephant and rejoined her herd.

The hermits looked after the baby elephant. He played with them and they fed him bananas and other vegetables.

He used to fill water in his trunk and sprinkle at the plants in the hermitage. This action inspired a hermit—

This baby elephant has become our sechanak.#

Since then all hermits called him Sechanak.

Sechanak = one who waters the plants.

One day Sechanak was drinking water at the river-bank when the aging bull-elephant arrived there with the herd. The bull was surprised to see a young male elephant.

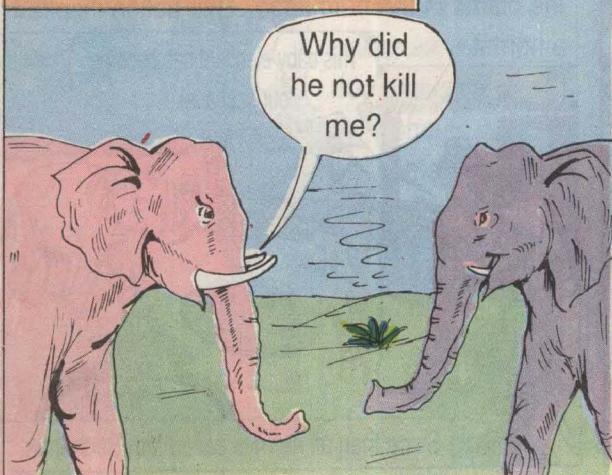


He at once attacked Sechanak.

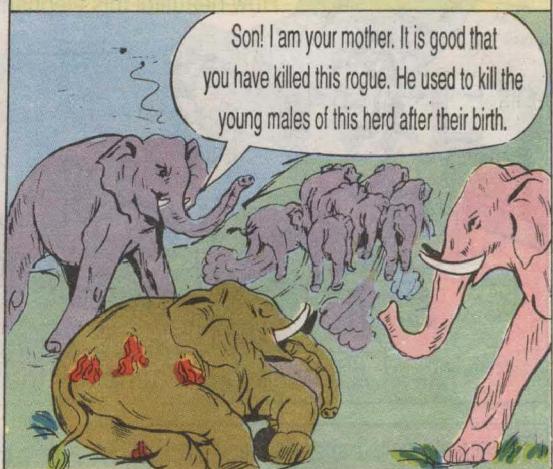
Sechanak was young and strong. He hit the old bull and fell him on the ground. Goring the bull with his tusks Sechanak killed him.



Sechanak asked his mother—

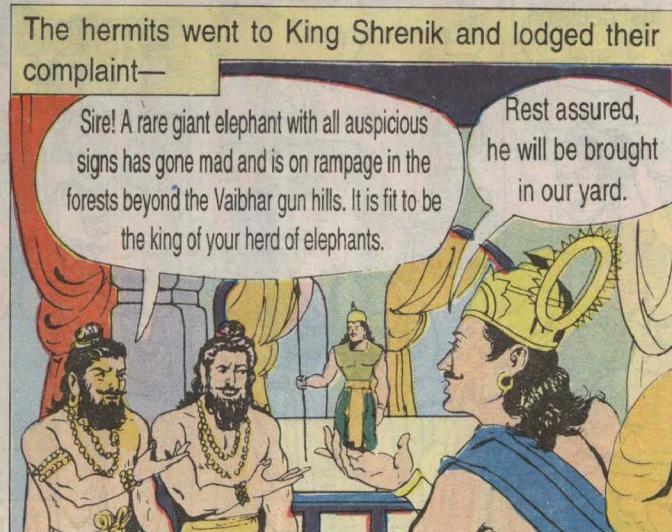
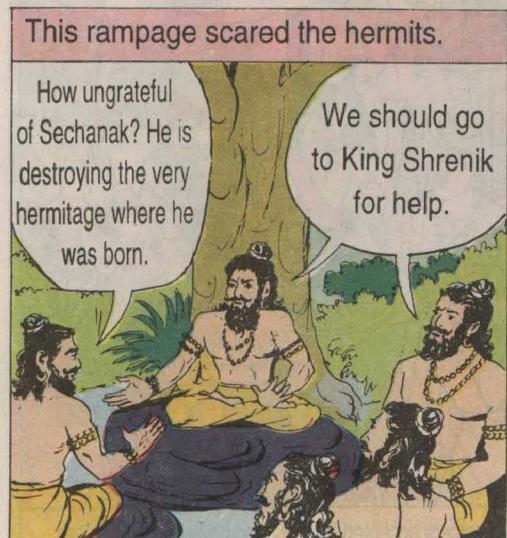
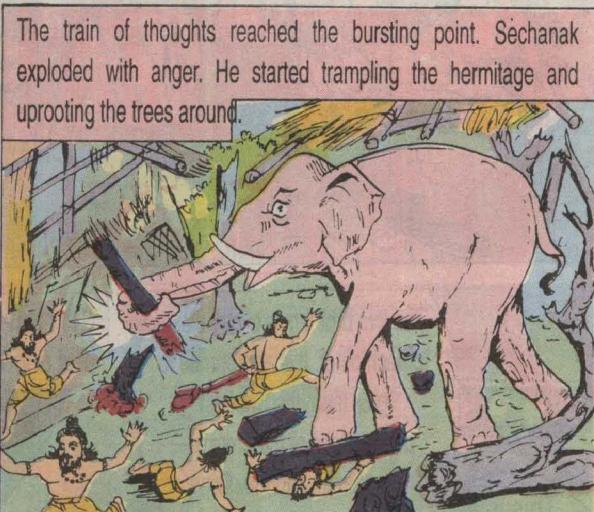
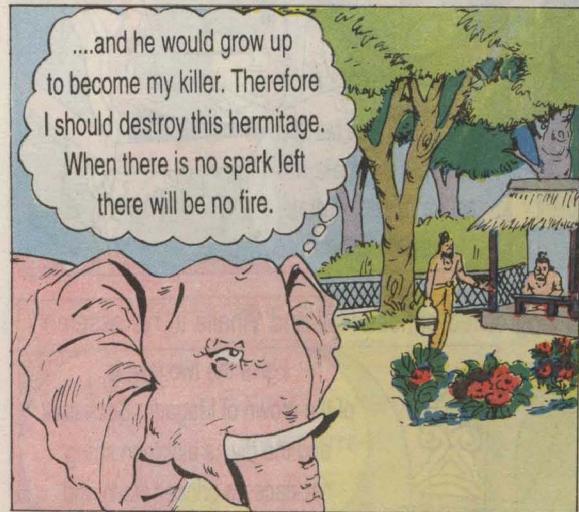
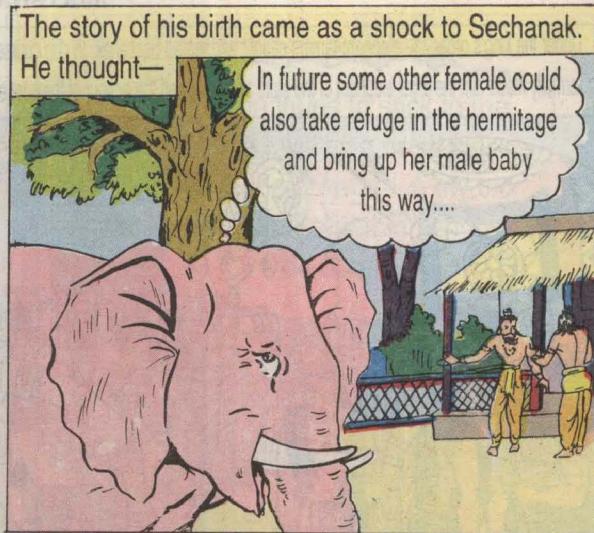


With the death of the leader the herd scattered. An aging female approached Sechanak—

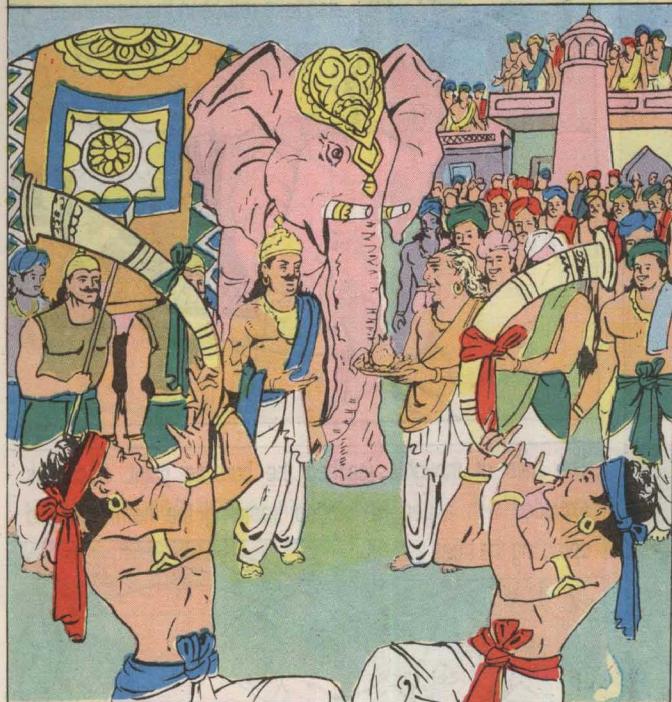


She narrated the story of his birth—





Under the king's order, the elephant-tamers caught and tamed Sechanak. In due course the king formally made him the chief-elephant of the state and bestowed the honour of the best elephant.



One day King Shrenik was talking to queen Chelna in the palace—



Queen! I am getting old, now. I should hand over the responsibilities of this large empire to my eldest son, Ashok Chandra Kunik. We shall find an auspicious date and crown him.

But my lord! I have two other sons, Halla and Vihalla, who are like my eyes. What are your plans for them?

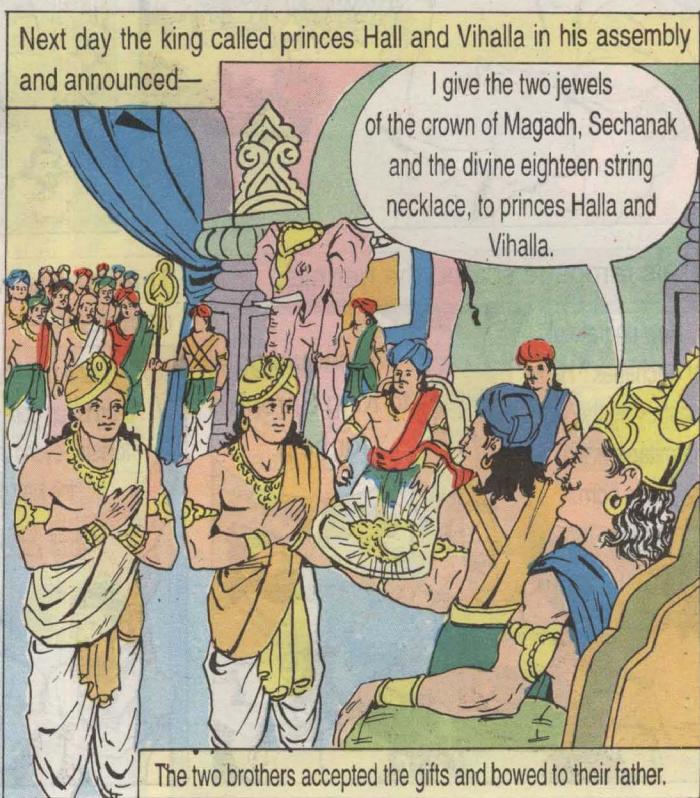
The two brothers are very close to each other. It is appropriate to give them the two best possessions of the empire — Sechanak and the divine eighteen string necklace.

This is a just decision, sire!



Next day the king called princes Halla and Vihalla in his assembly and announced—

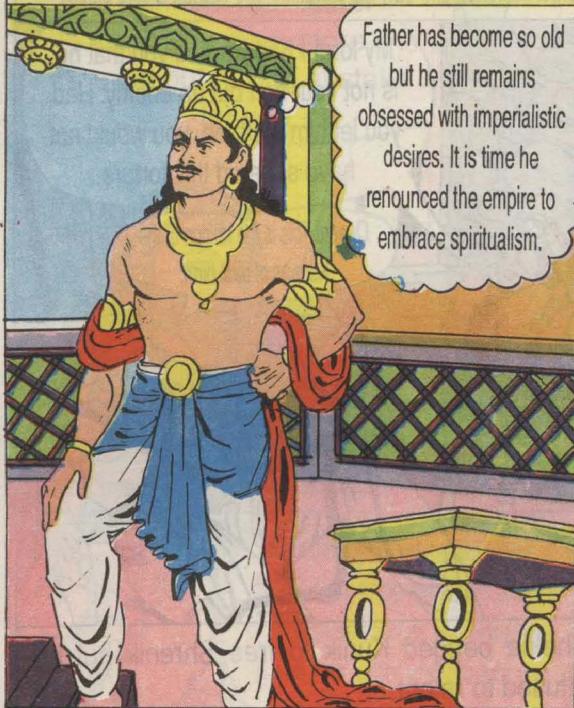
I give the two jewels of the crown of Magadh, Sechanak and the divine eighteen string necklace, to princes Halla and Vihalla.



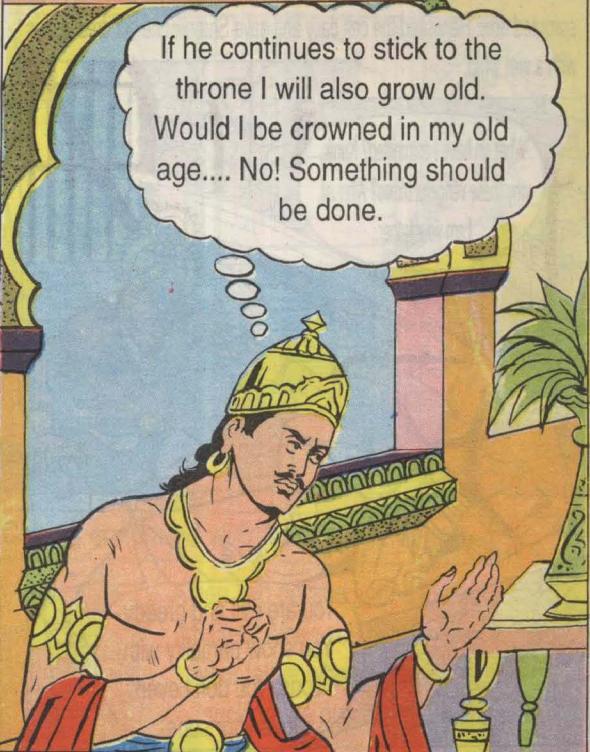
The two brothers accepted the gifts and bowed to their father.

These two combined matched half the total worth of the Magadh empire.

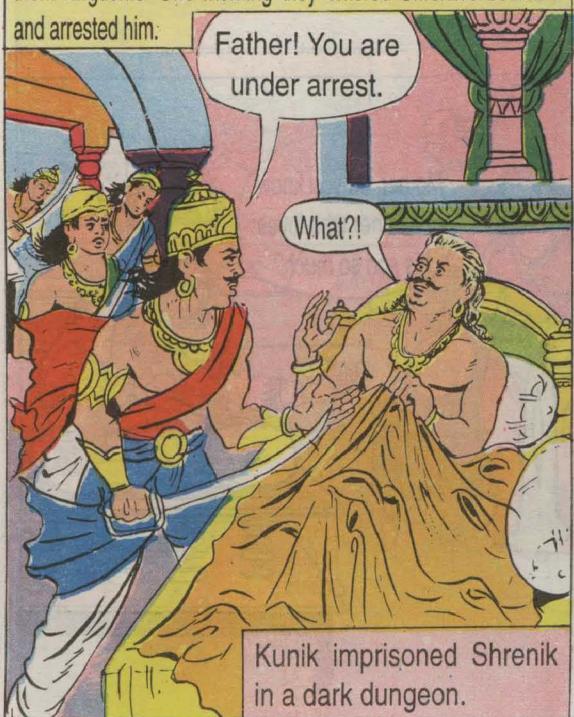
With passage of time Kunik's antagonism for Shrenik kept on increasing. One day he thought—



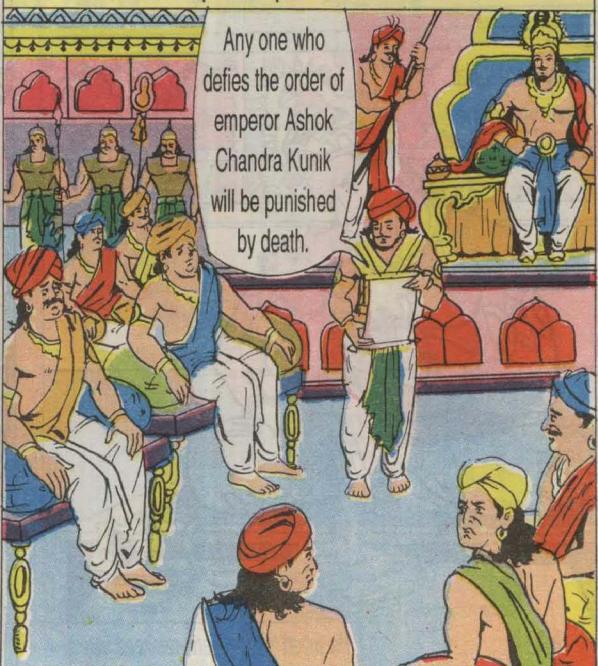
The train of thoughts took a turn—



He at once enlisted the help of his ten step brothers[#] by offering them kingdoms. One morning they entered Shrenik's bedroom and arrested him.

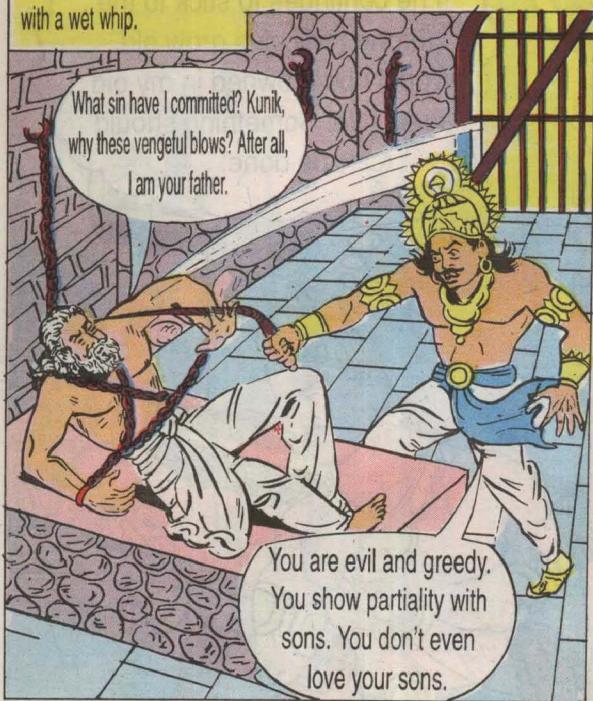


The fearsome bearing of Kunik crushed any semblance of a revolt. He ascended the throne of Magadh and rewarded his brothers with important positions in the state.

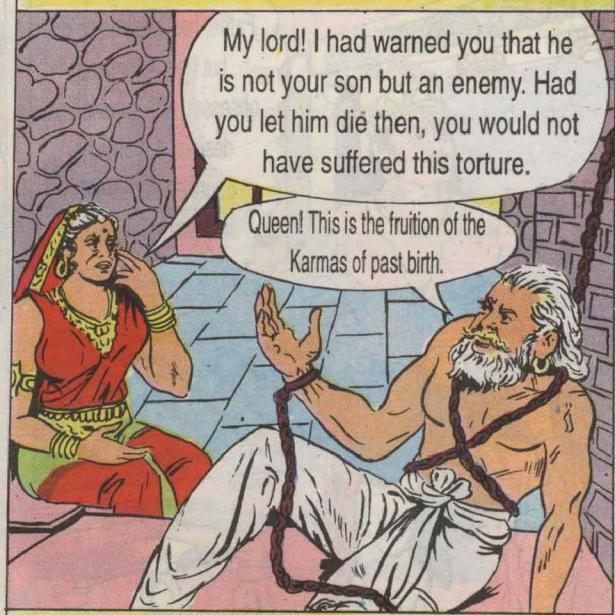


[#] Shrenik had ten sons, Kaal Kumar and others, by his other ten queens including Kaali and Mahakaali.

The seeds of hatred for Shrenik, sown in the mind of Kunik since childhood, sprouted now. He visited the cell daily and gave Shrenik one hundred lashes with a wet whip.

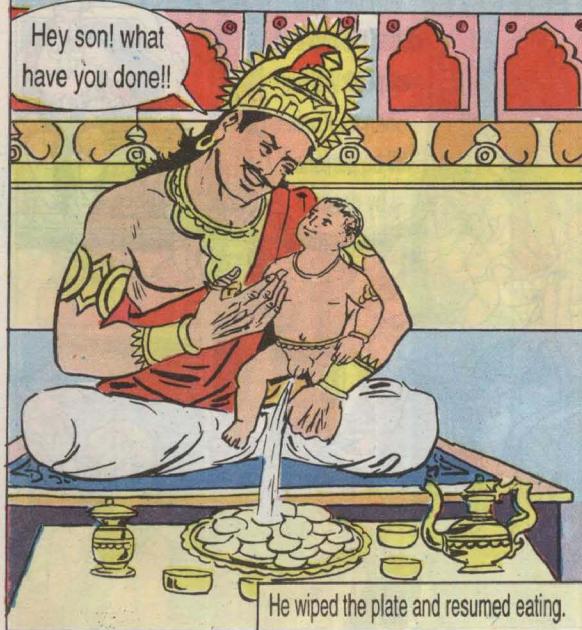


When queen Chelna knew of this she at once came to see Shrenik. When she saw his condition she started crying bitterly—

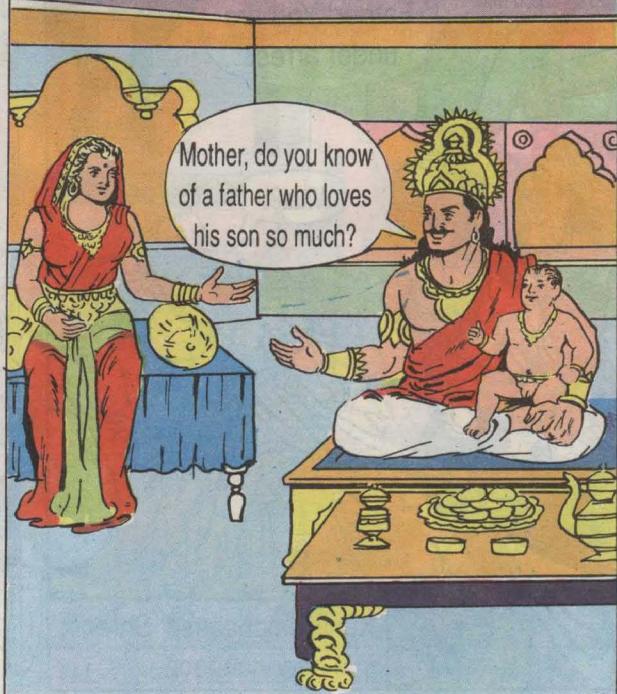


Chelna begged Kunik to free Shrenik but he refused to relent.

One day Kunik was taking his meals while his infant son Uday was in his lap. Suddenly the son urinated all over the plate. Kunik laughed at this mischief of his beloved son.



Chelna was sitting nearby. Kunik smiled and asked—



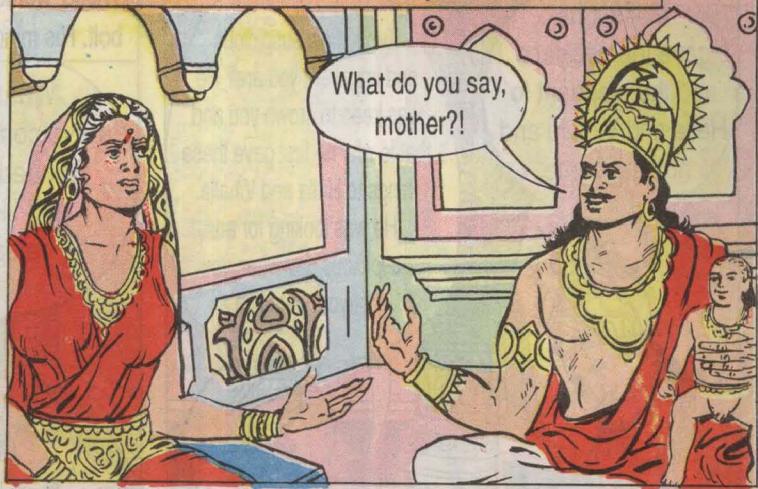
Chelna replied bitterly—

Sinner! Your father loved you even more. He even put his life at stake for you.



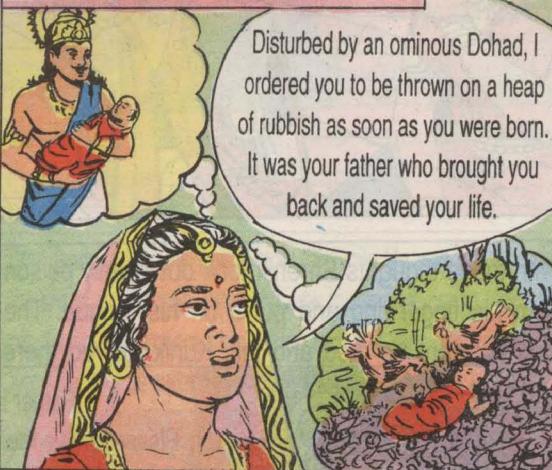
Kunik looked at his mother with surprise and uttered—

What do you say, mother?!



Chelna narrated the story of his birth—

Disturbed by an ominous Dohad, I ordered you to be thrown on a heap of rubbish as soon as you were born. It was your father who brought you back and saved your life.



Chelna continued with tears in her eyes—

A hen had pecked your finger and it got infected. When you cried in pain it was your father who gave you relief by sucking the pus from your finger.

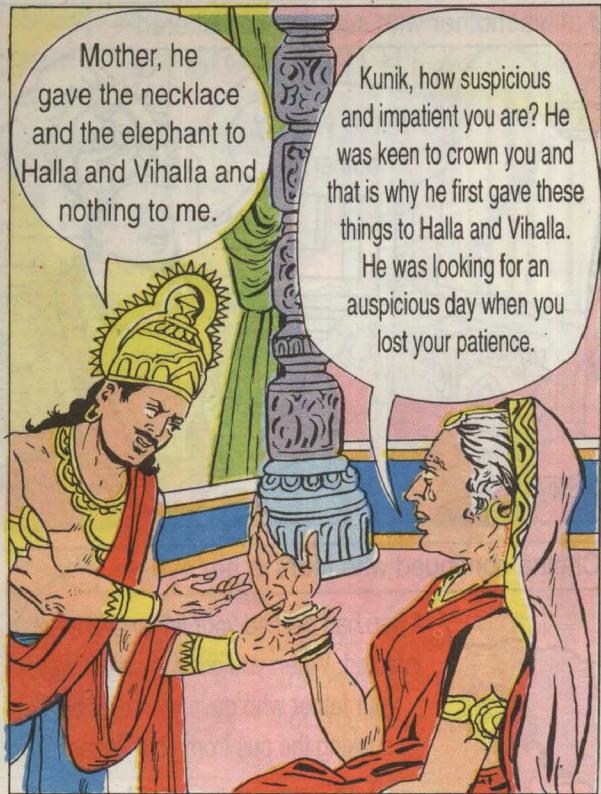


Kunik looked agape at his mother—

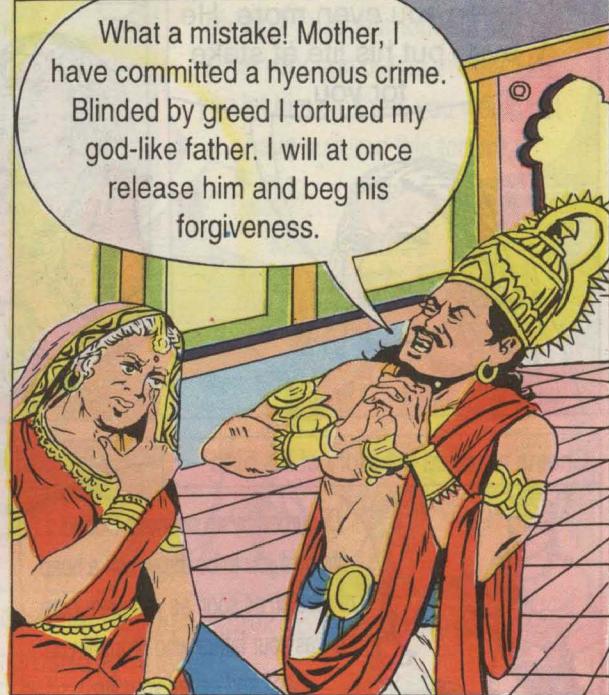
Mother! If my father loved me so much why he disfavored me.

What disfavor?

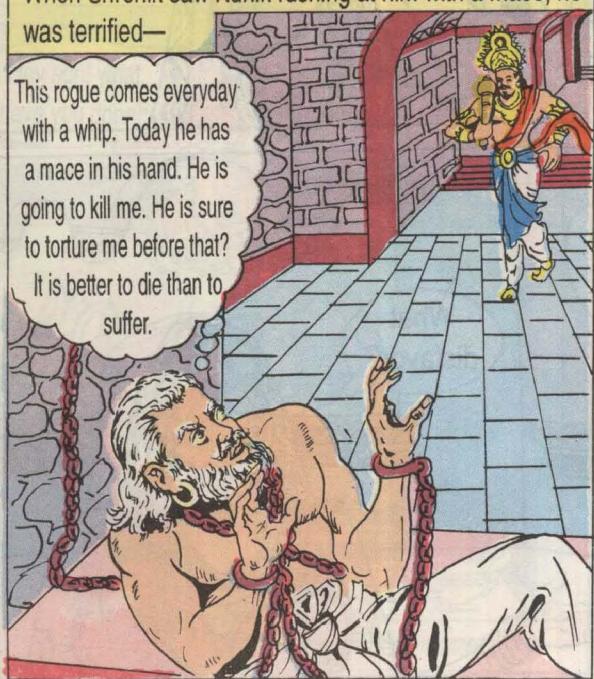




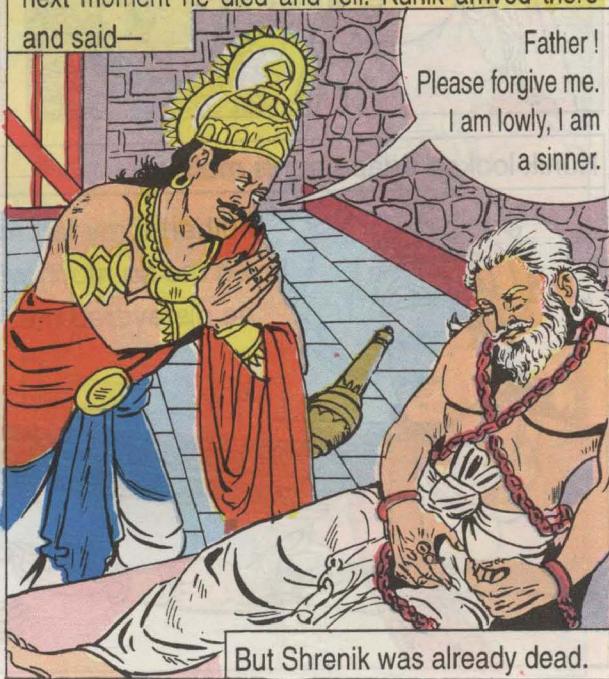
These words from his mother hit Kunik like a thunder bolt. His mind in turmoil, Kunik started cursing himself—



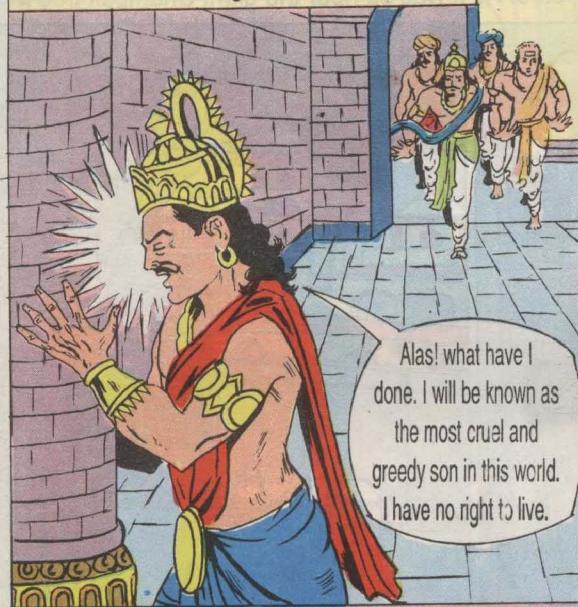
Filled with repentance, Kunik rushed towards the prison. To break the shackles, he took a mace in his hand. When Shrenik saw Kunik rushing at him with a mace, he was terrified—



With these thoughts Shrenik took out deadly poison from his finger-ring and put it on his tongue. The next moment he died and fell. Kunik arrived there and said—

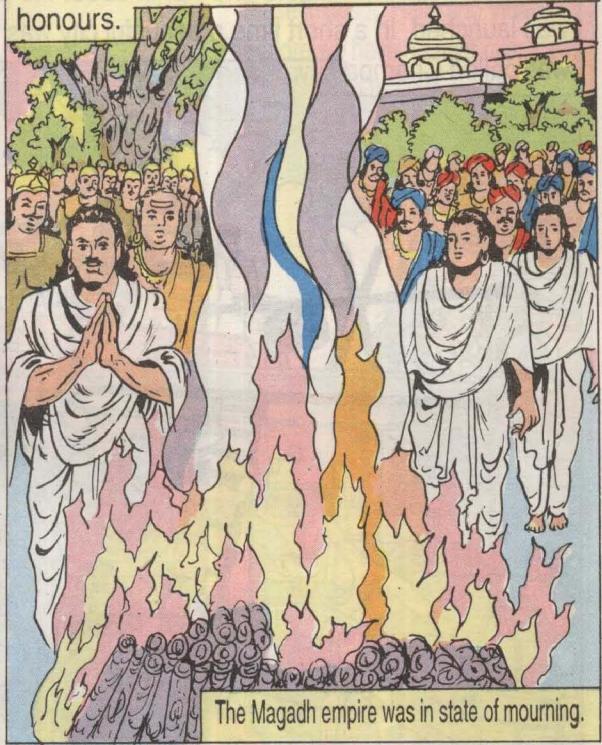


When Kunik found his father dead he started wailing like a child and striking his head with the wall.

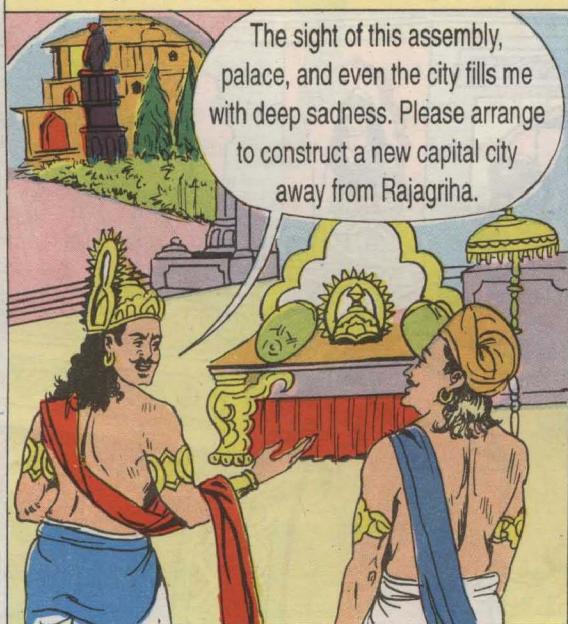


By then the ministers, the state priest and many others arrived and pacified Kunik.

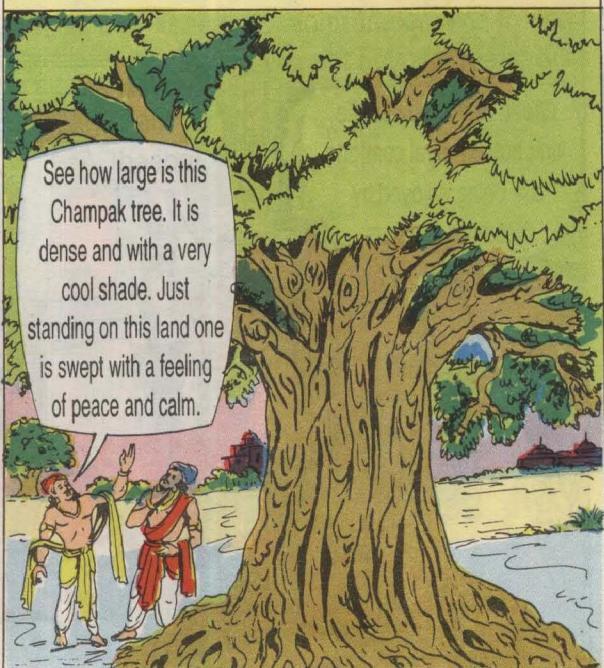
Next day Shrenik was cremated with all state honours.



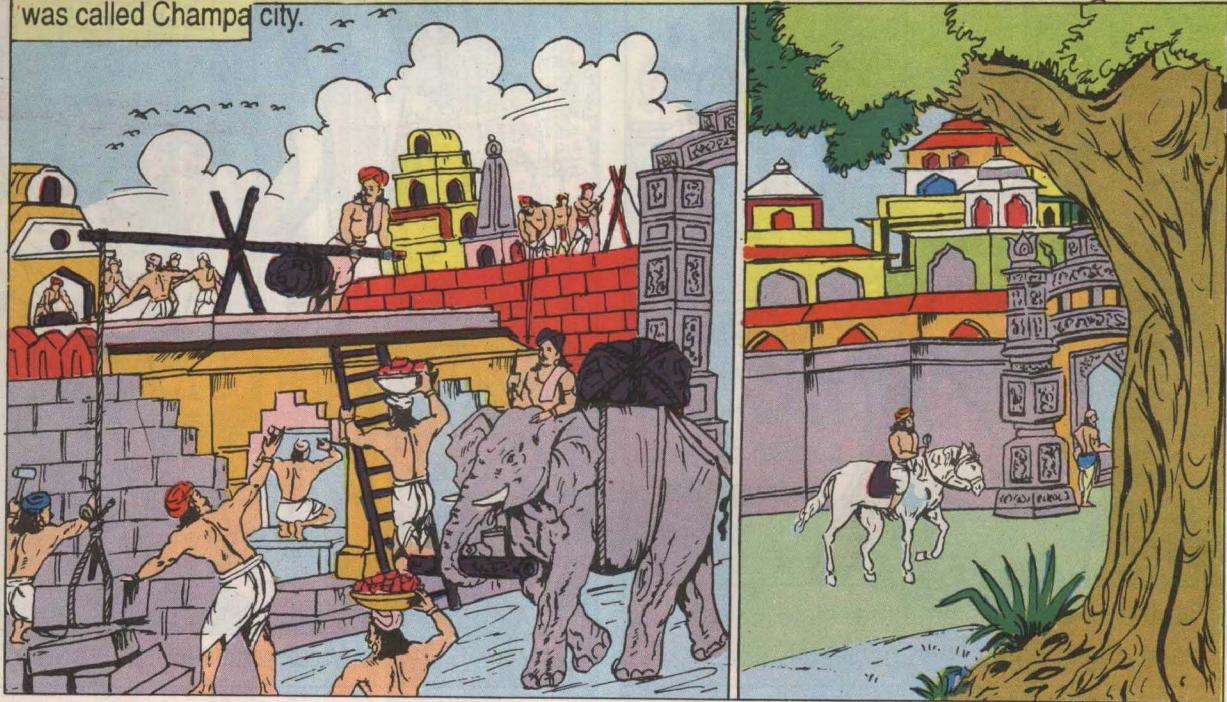
The death of Shrenik was a blow to Kunik. He was consumed by the fire of repentance. When he saw the throne, crown, and other regalia he remembered his father and a gloom descended over him. One day he called his ministers and said—



The ministers deputed architects to look for a suitable place. During their search the architects came to a giant Champak tree at the center of a large level plot of land.



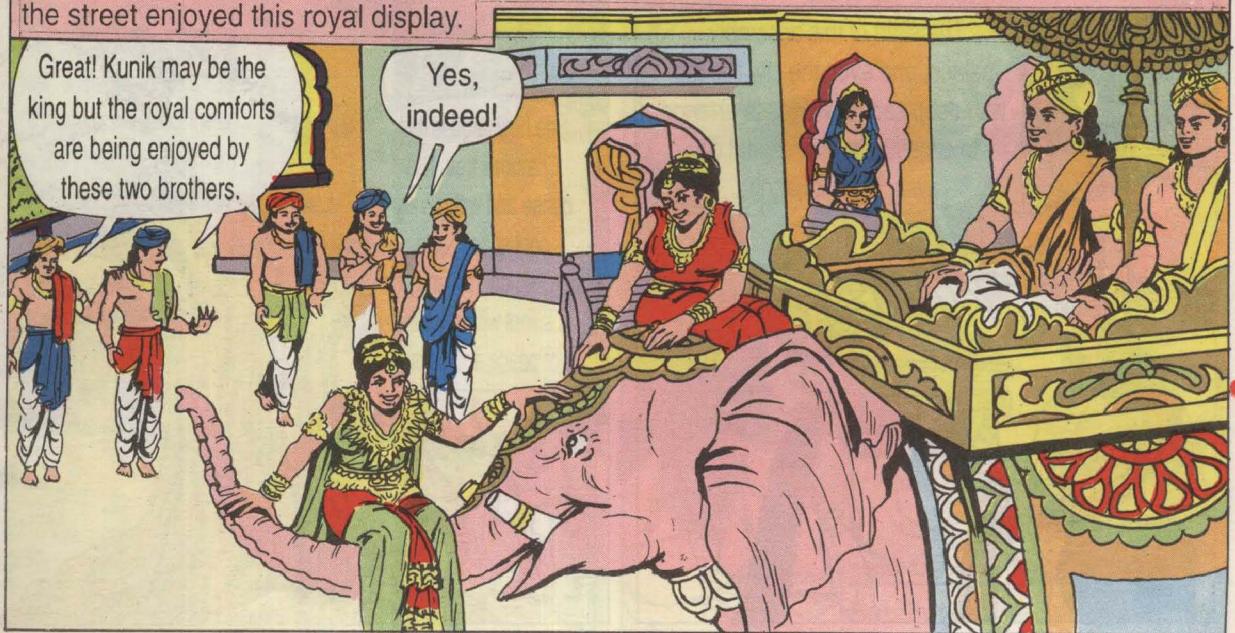
The architects and augurs told Kunik about the place. The king gave the order and the construction was launched. In a short time a beautiful city was erected. As it was so near the giant Champak tree it was called Champa city.



One day queen Padmavati was enjoying the beauty of the town from the balcony of her palace when she saw princes Halla and Vihalla perched on elephant Sechanak with their wives. They were richly attired. One of the wives had the divine necklace in her neck and the other a divine pair of shining ear rings. Sechanak was playfully manipulating them with his trunk. The people on the street enjoyed this royal display.

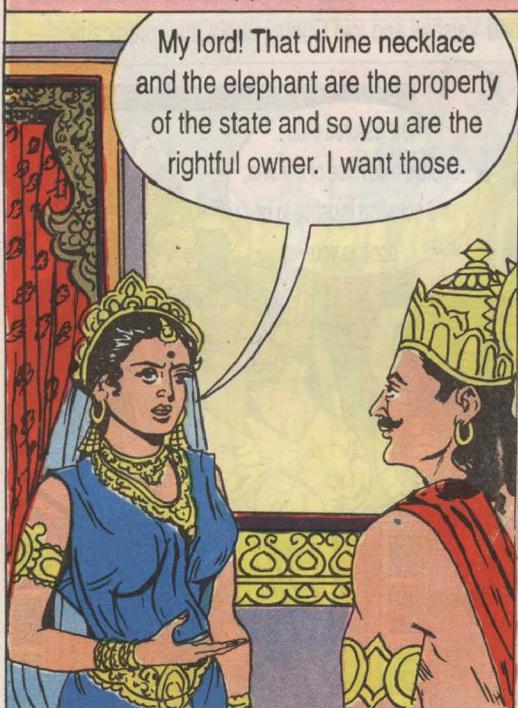
Great! Kunik may be the king but the royal comforts are being enjoyed by these two brothers.

Yes,
indeed!



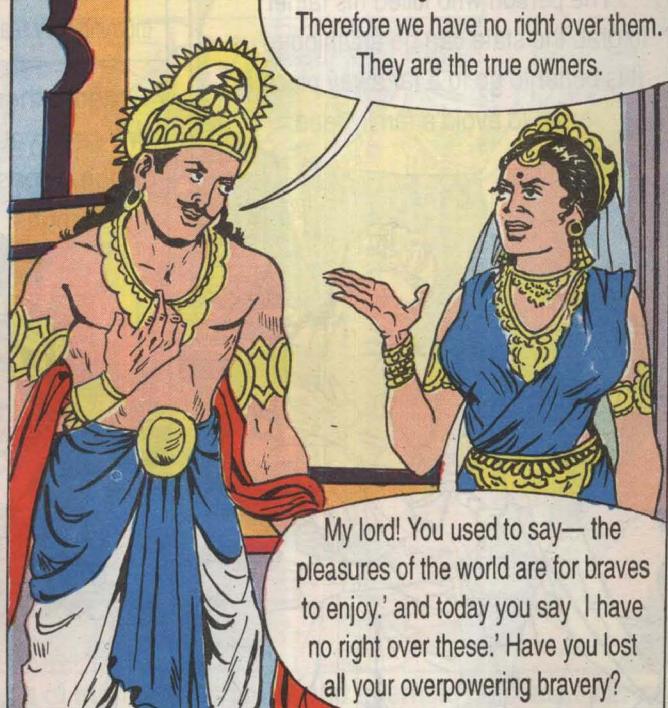
Padmavati burned with envy when she saw all this. She approached Kunik—

My lord! That divine necklace and the elephant are the property of the state and so you are the rightful owner. I want those.



Kunik said—

Queen! Father had given these things to Halla and Vihalla. Therefore we have no right over them. They are the true owners.

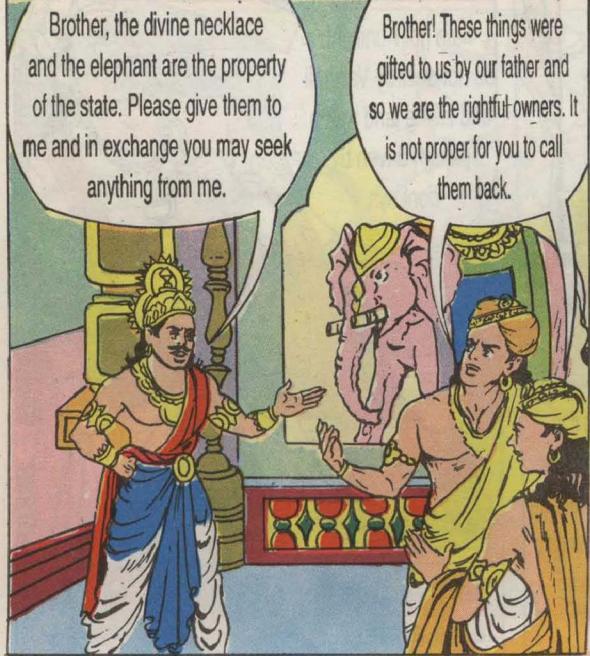


My lord! You used to say—the pleasures of the world are for braves to enjoy.' and today you say I have no right over these.' Have you lost all your overpowering bravery?

Kunik tried in vain to dissuade Padmavati, but she remained adamant and retired to her chamber of solitude. At last, Kunik reluctantly called Halla and Vihalla and said—

Brother, the divine necklace and the elephant are the property of the state. Please give them to me and in exchange you may seek anything from me.

Brother! These things were gifted to us by our father and so we are the rightful owners. It is not proper for you to call them back.



Kunik became angry—

I take what I desire. Think well. You will come to harm if you take a wrong decision.

All right, brother. We will think it over and let you know tomorrow.



Halla and Vihalla calmly replied.

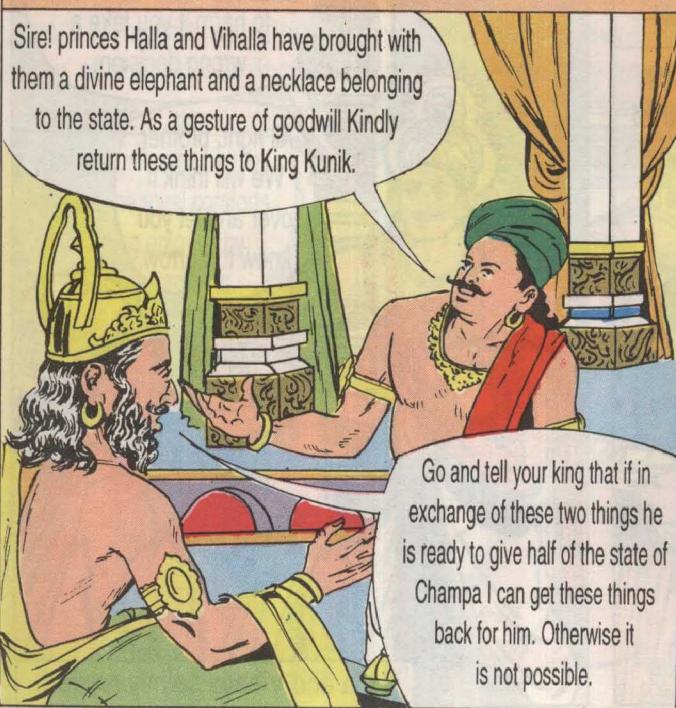
The two brothers discussed—

The person who killed his father to grab the state can do anything to us. It is better to go to a far away place in order to avoid a family feud.



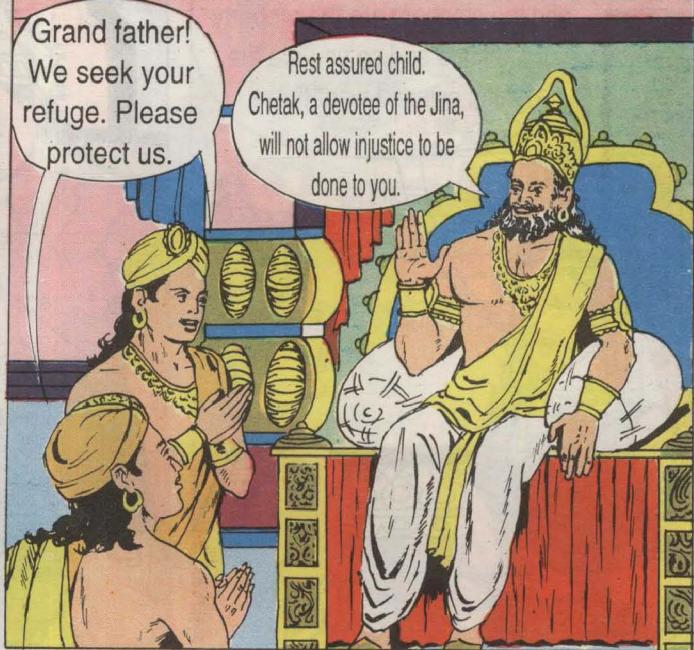
When Kunik knew of this, he sent his emissary to King Chetak. The emissary gave the message—

Sire! princes Halla and Vihalla have brought with them a divine elephant and a necklace belonging to the state. As a gesture of goodwill Kindly return these things to King Kunik.



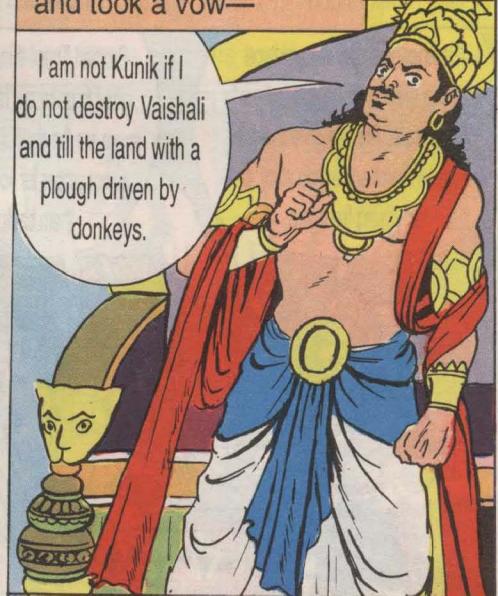
Go and tell your king that if in exchange of these two things he is ready to give half of the state of Champa I can get these things back for him. Otherwise it is not possible.

That very night the two brothers, riding Sechanak, left for Vaishali, the capital of the state owned by their maternal grand father Chetak. In the morning they reached Vaishali and told Chetak about their predicament—



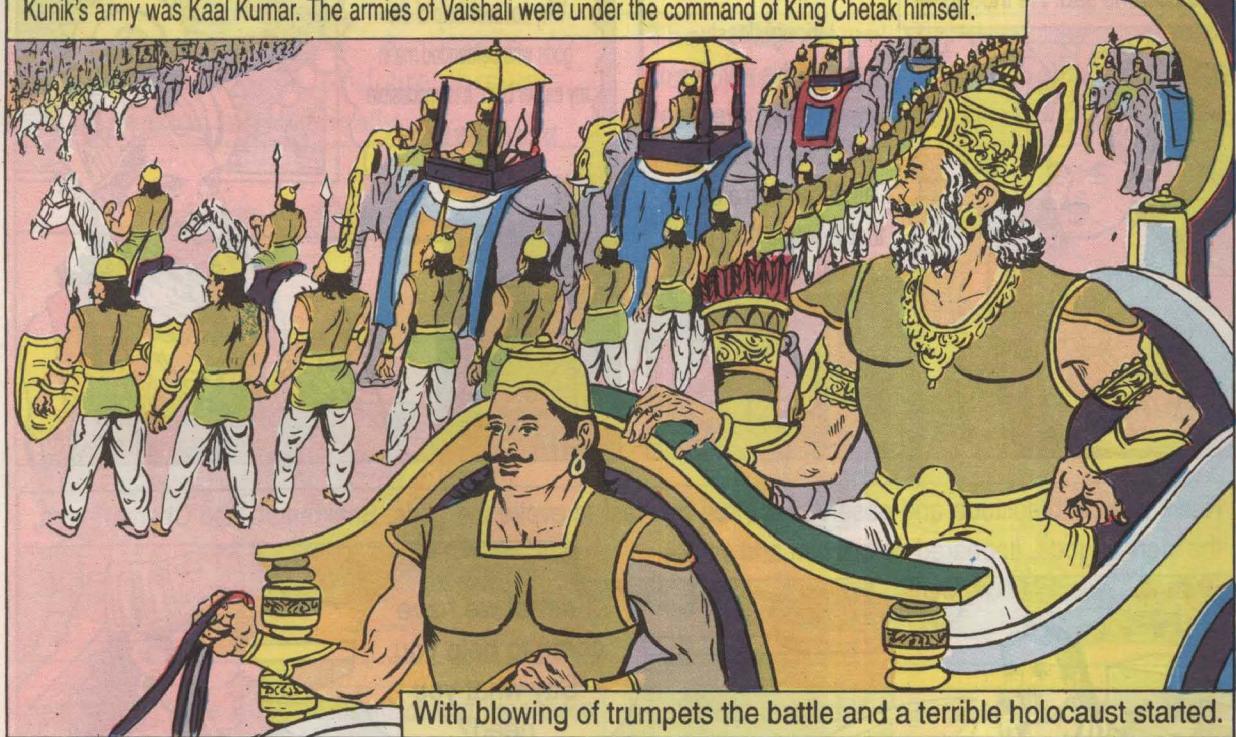
The emissary conveyed this answer to Kunik. The king lost his temper and took a vow—

I am not Kunik if I do not destroy Vaishali and till the land with a plough driven by donkeys.



He marched toward Vaishali with his large army.

The armies of Vaishali also marched to the battle field. Both the armies used different battle formations. The commander of Kunik's army was Kaal Kumar. The armies of Vaishali were under the command of King Chetak himself.



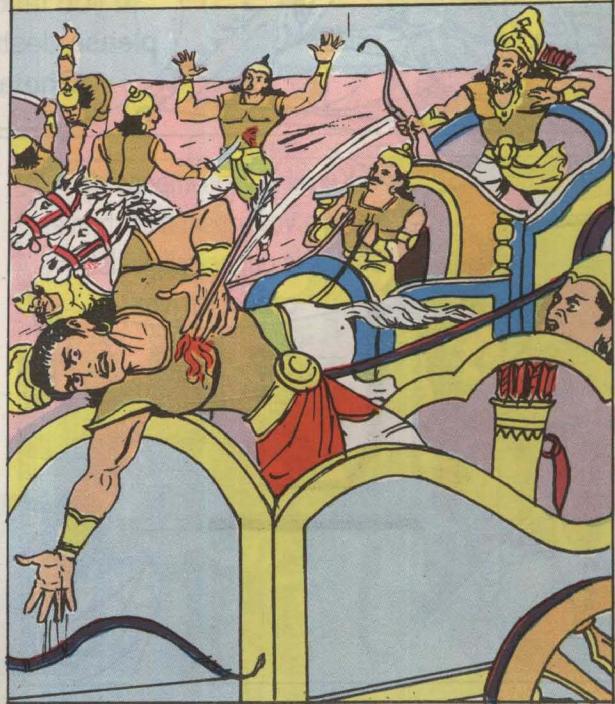
With blowing of trumpets the battle and a terrible holocaust started.

By evening Kaalkumar reached near Chetak and launched arrows at him. Chetak countered with a divine arrow that pierced Kaal Kumar's chest and he died on the spot. #



By sunset the war ended.

Next day Mahakaal became the commander and Chetak again used his divine arrow to kill him.



Chetak's divine arrow had the power to kill the targeted person but he had vowed to use it only once during a day.

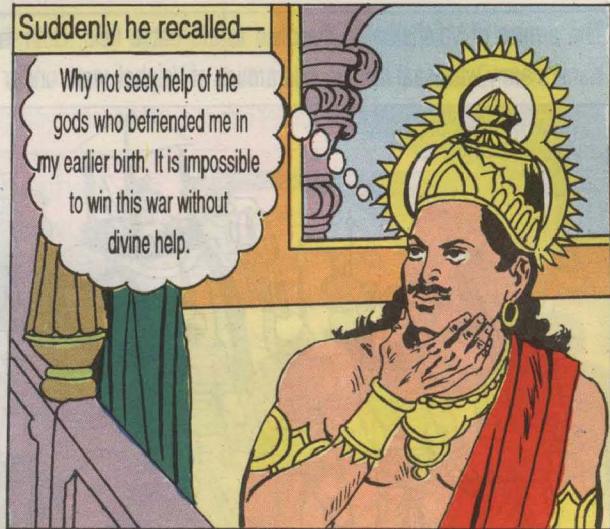
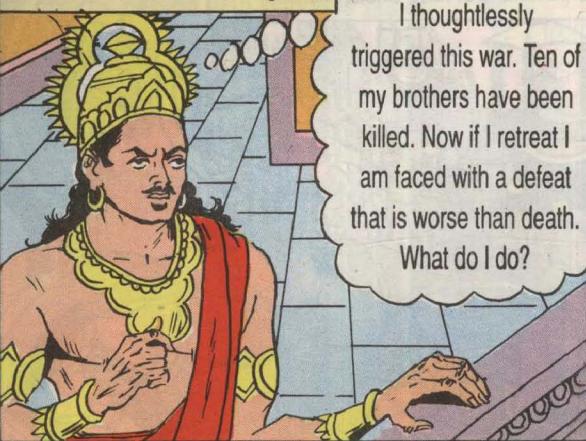
In ten days Kunik's ten brothers were killed. He lost hope and became sad. He thought—

I thoughtlessly triggered this war. Ten of my brothers have been killed. Now if I retreat I am faced with a defeat that is worse than death.

What do I do?

Suddenly he recalled—

Why not seek help of the gods who befriended me in my earlier birth. It is impossible to win this war without divine help.

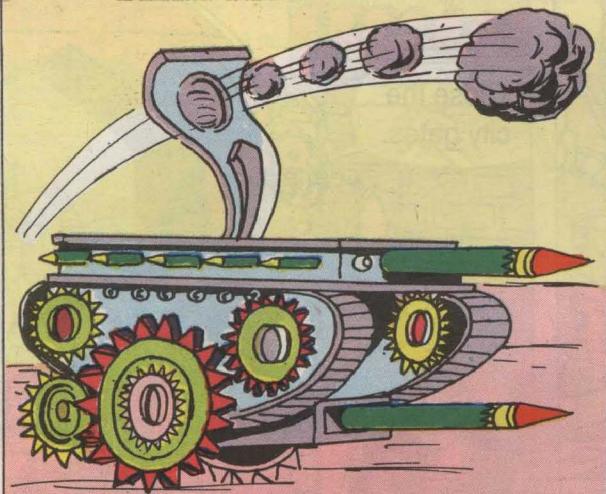


Kunik went into solitude and observed a three day fast to evoke the gods. Shakrendra and Chamarendra, the friendly gods, appeared before him and said—

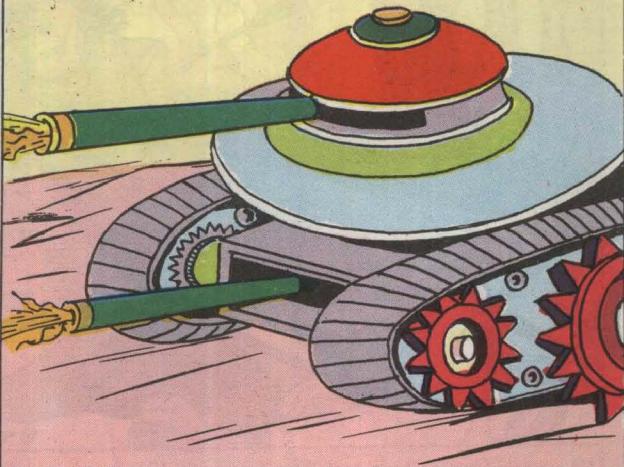


The gods also assembled two powerful battle armaments named Mahashilakantak and Rath-musal.

The Rath-musal was a deadly tank equipped with guns and fire throwers. It was operated automatically.



The Rath-musal was a deadly tank equipped with guns and fire throwers. It was operated automatically.



Next morning Kunik launched his attack and used these two deadly weapons. Emitting terrible sound the two tanks moved towards the Vaishali armies and struck havoc. The soldiers were crushed and burnt like pieces of straw.



The disorganized Vaishali army retreated in panic. King Chetak aimed his divine arrow at Kunik. But it was wasted by the divine armor.



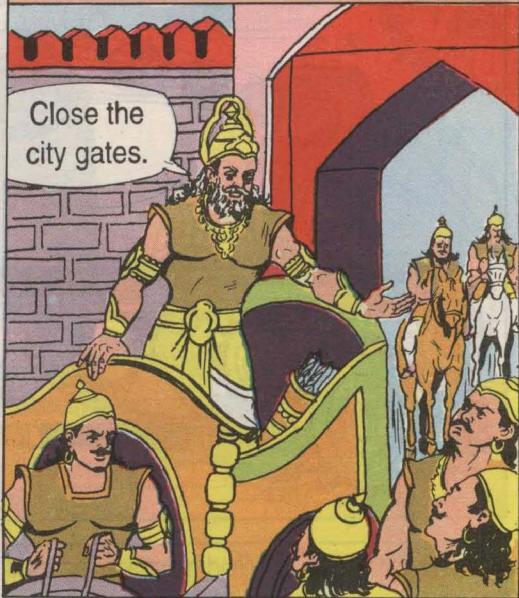
True to his vow, Chetak did not use another divine arrow.

Next day Chetak gave command of the army to the great warrior Varun Naag who was observing a two day fast. There was a furious battle and by evening, Varun Naag was fatally wounded.

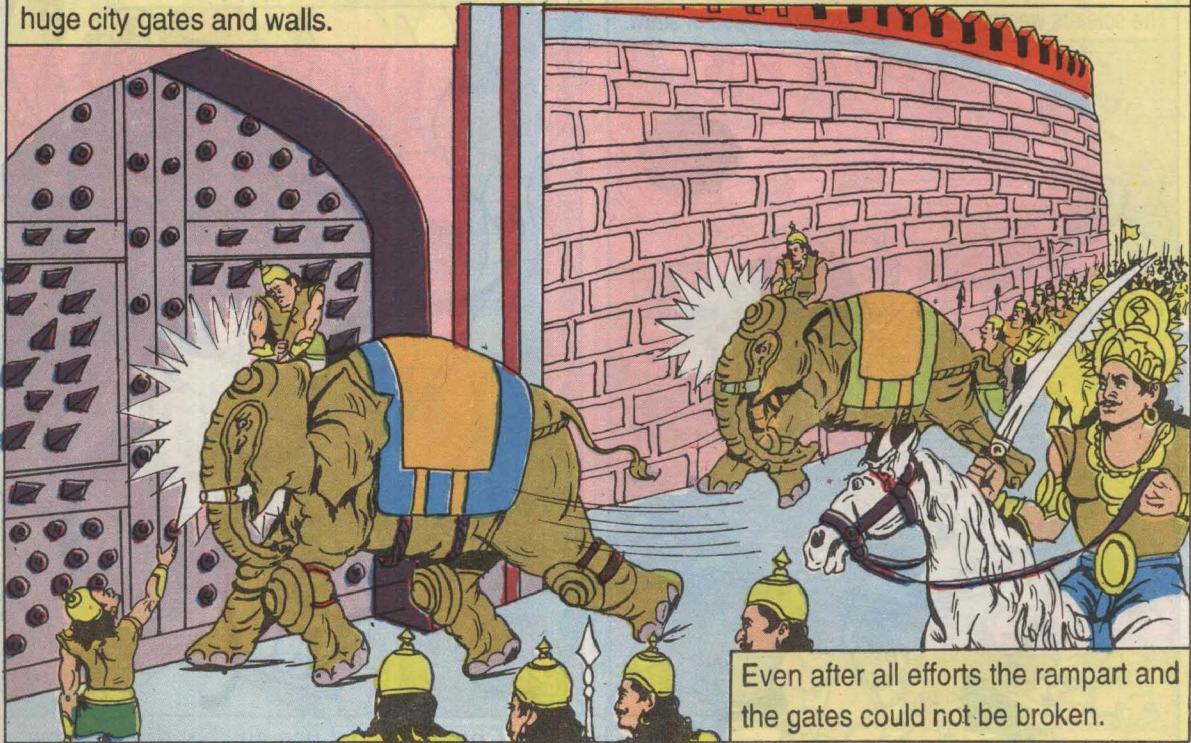


He retreated into solitude, took the ultimate vow (Santhara), and did critical review of his deeds before dying in peace. He took rebirth as a god.[#]

By evening the battle field was a deathly site of scattered corpses. Terror stricken by the terrible manslaughter, the remaining soldiers of Vaishali retreated into the walled city. King Chetak also joined them and ordered—



Kunik's army surrounded the city and with the help of his elephants launched an attack on the huge city gates and walls.



Even after all efforts the rampart and the gates could not be broken.

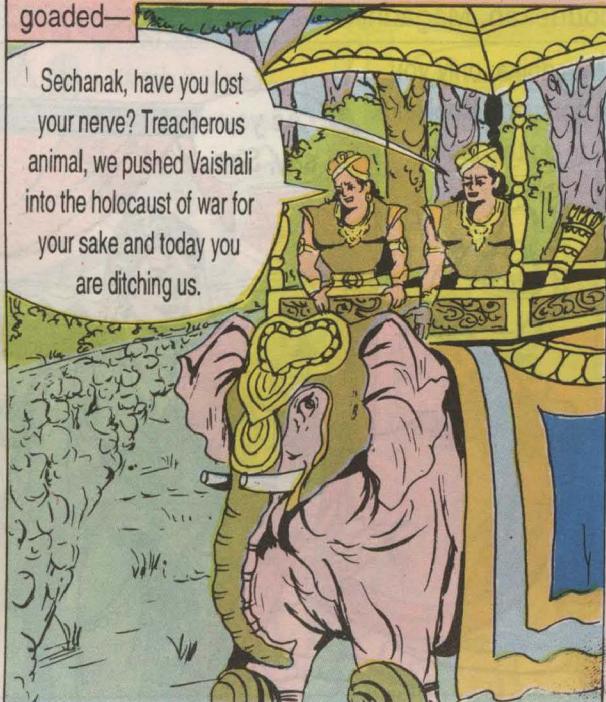
He is said to be the only human being who reincarnated as a god after dying in a war.

To maul Kunik's army, Halla and Vihalla resorted to gorilla tactics riding Sechanak during the night. Kunik got disturbed and consulted his ministers. One of them advised—

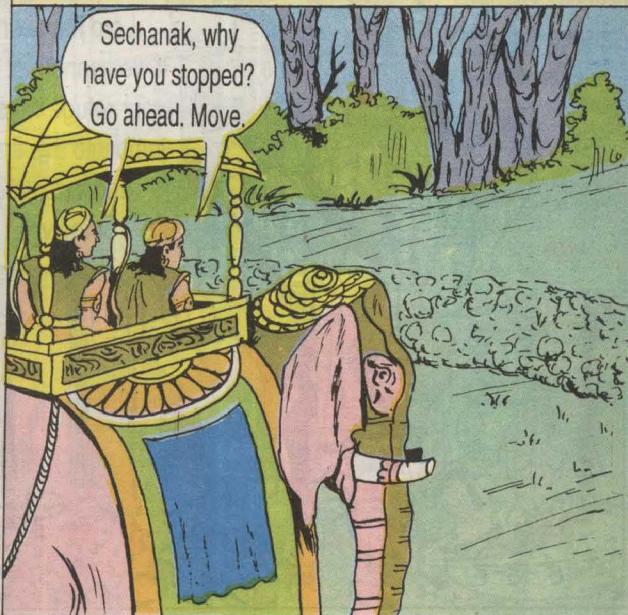
Sire! A large pit should be dug on the path on which Sechanak comes. Burning charcoal should be heaped in it and then it should be covered with leaves and branches.



But aware of the danger Sechanak did not move. Ignorant of the unseen danger the princes goaded—



During the night Halla and Vihalla proceeded towards the battle ground riding on Sechanak. After going some distance Sechanak sensed the impending danger with the help of his sixth sense. He stopped when he came to the ditch. The princes encouraged him—



Such harsh words disturbed Sechanak. He threw the princes on the ground and stepped ahead into the camouflaged pit of fire.

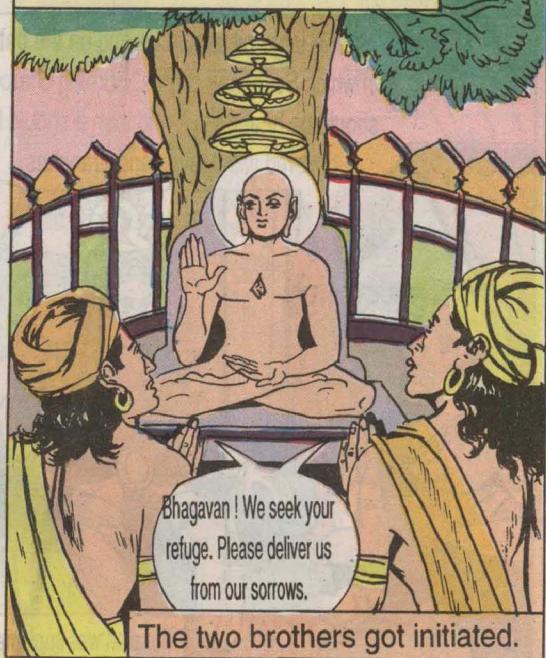


When they saw Sechanak burning in flames, the princes repented—

What have we done? We have pushed our faithful elephant into a pit of fire.

Now our lives are worthless. O Lord Mahavir! If we cannot not take your refuge we shall jump into this fire-pit and immolate ourselves.

With this turn of attitude the Shasan Devi # appeared and transported them before Lord Mahavir.



The two brothers got initiated.

In the other camp Kunik was worried because of his failure to breach the fortification of Vaishali. While he was thinking of some plan he heard a divine voice—

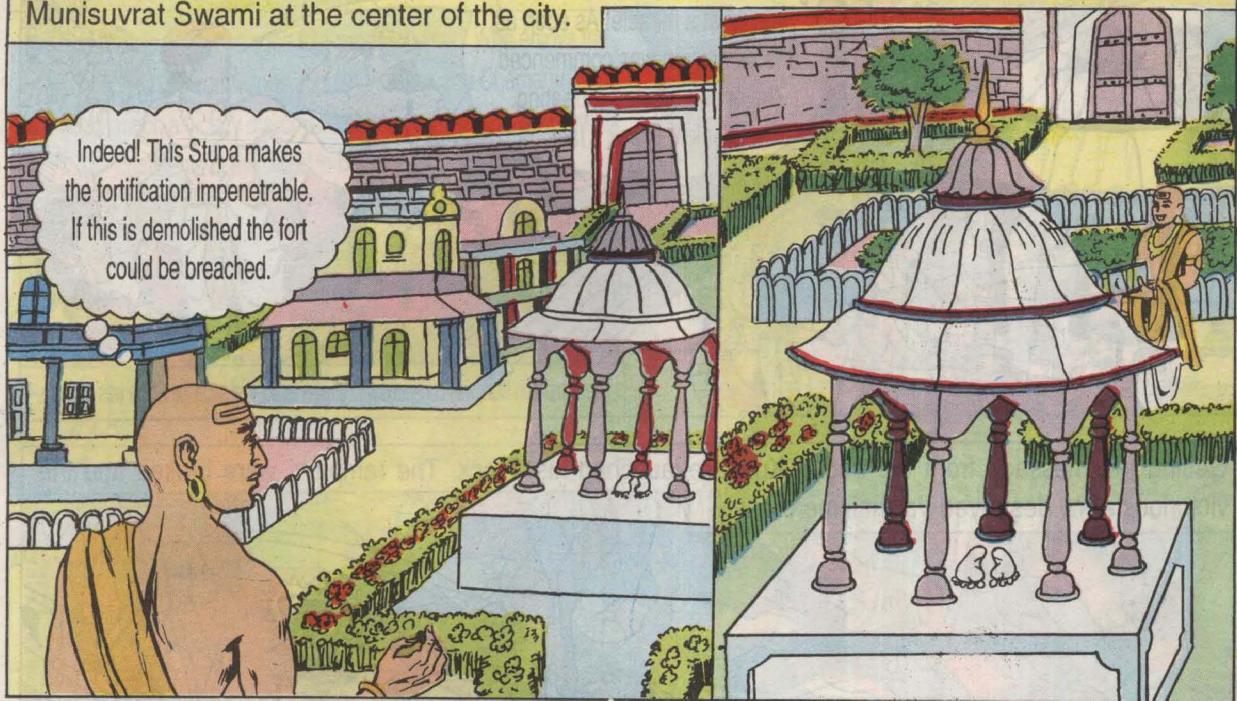
Only Koolvaluk Shraman can help breach the fort.

Kunik traced Koolvaluk with the help of his spies but the ascetic refused to help. Kunik assigned this duty to a courtesan, Magadhika—

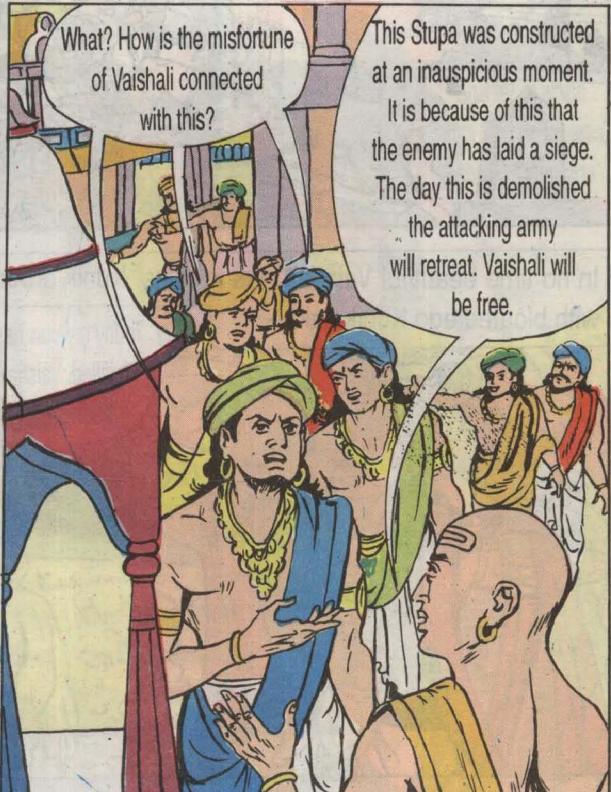
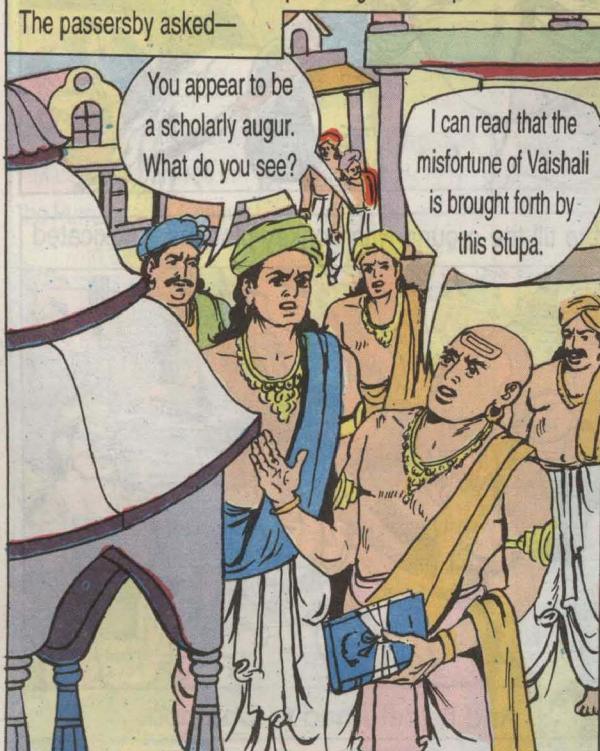


The guardian angel of the religious order.

Magadhika enticed Koolvaluk with her beauty and he fell from his grace. He disguised himself as an augur and entered Vaishali. Wandering around, he saw a large stupa[#] of Munisuvrat Swami at the center of the city.

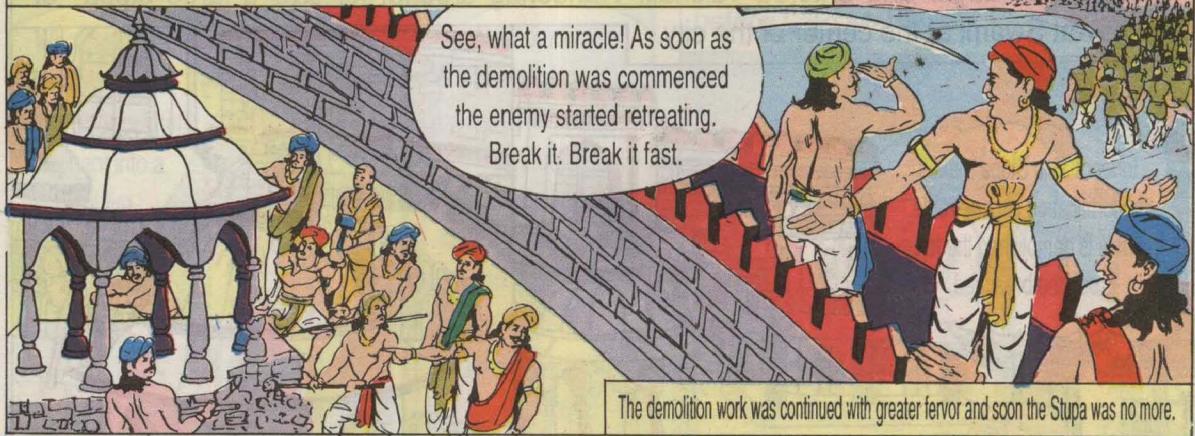


Koolvaluk came near the Stupa and gave it a special attention. The passersby asked—

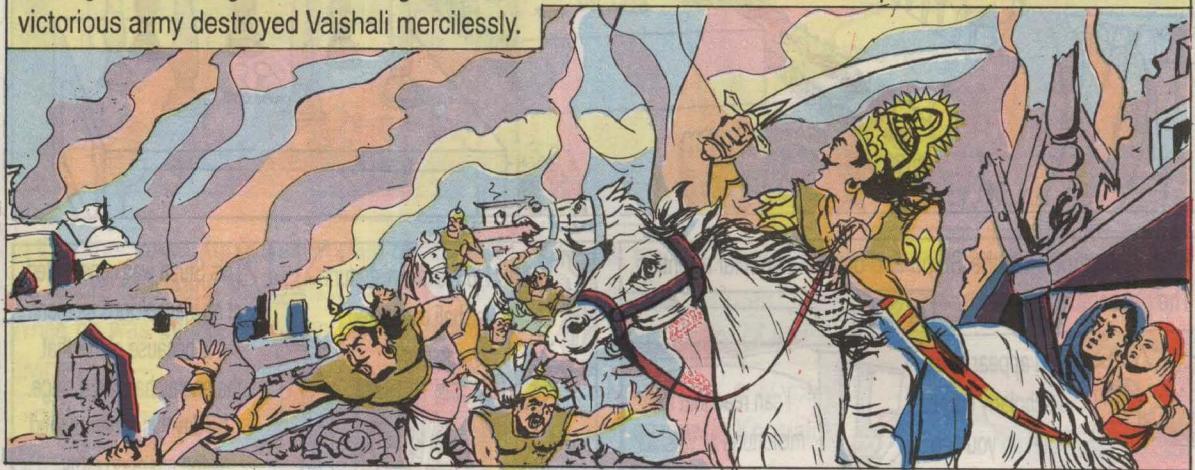


A dome shaped religious structure.

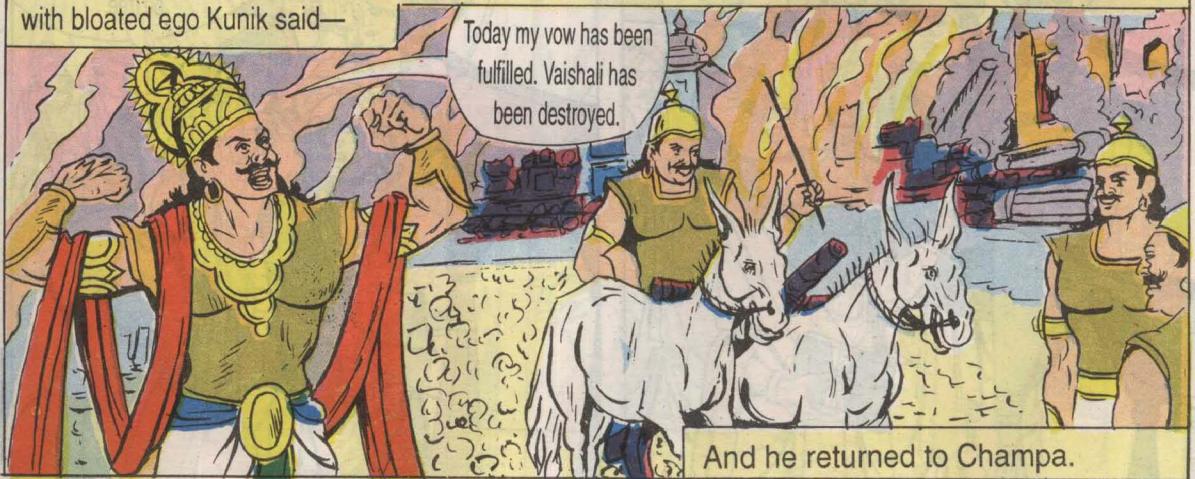
The innocent masses believed the crafty augur and started demolishing the Stupa. Following the plan, Kunik's army started retreating. The people commented—



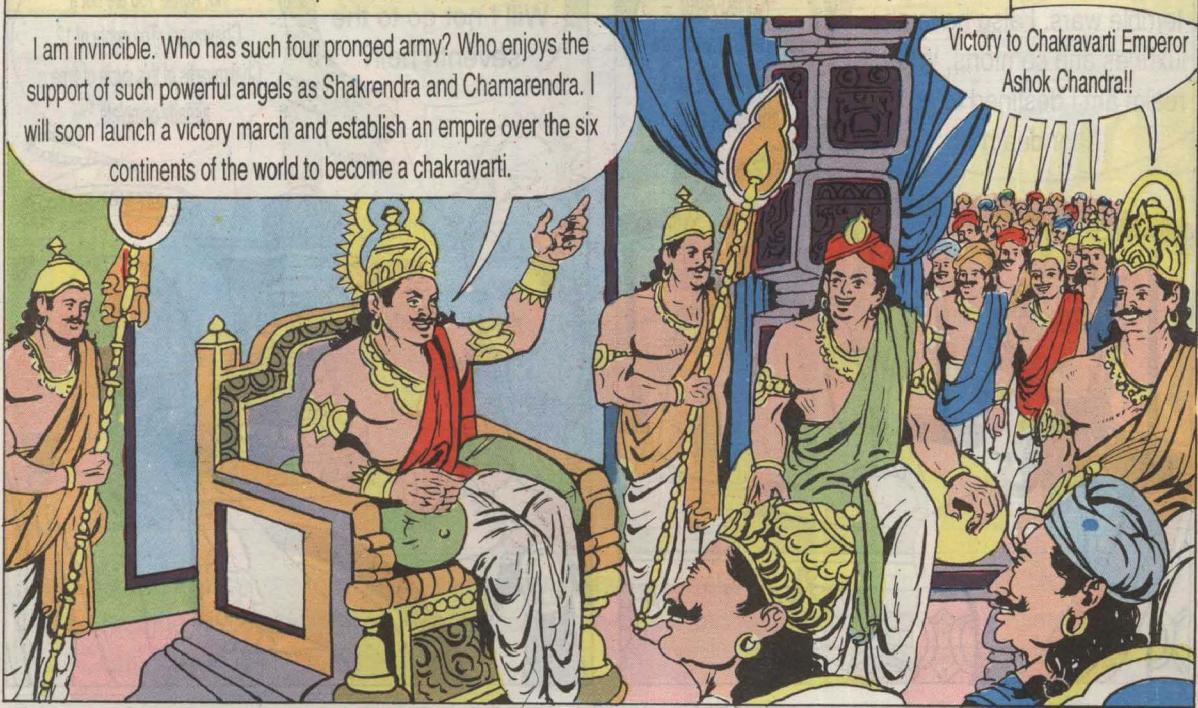
Getting the message from the augur, Kunik re-launched his attack. The ramparts were broken and the victorious army destroyed Vaishali mercilessly.



In no time beautiful Vaishali was in ruins. Kunik ordered to till the ground with donkey-ploughs. Intoxicated with bloated ego Kunik said—



In Champa, Kunik organized a gorgeous victory ceremony. Rulers and commanders from all parts of the sub-continent took part in these ceremonies. Kunik announced with pride—



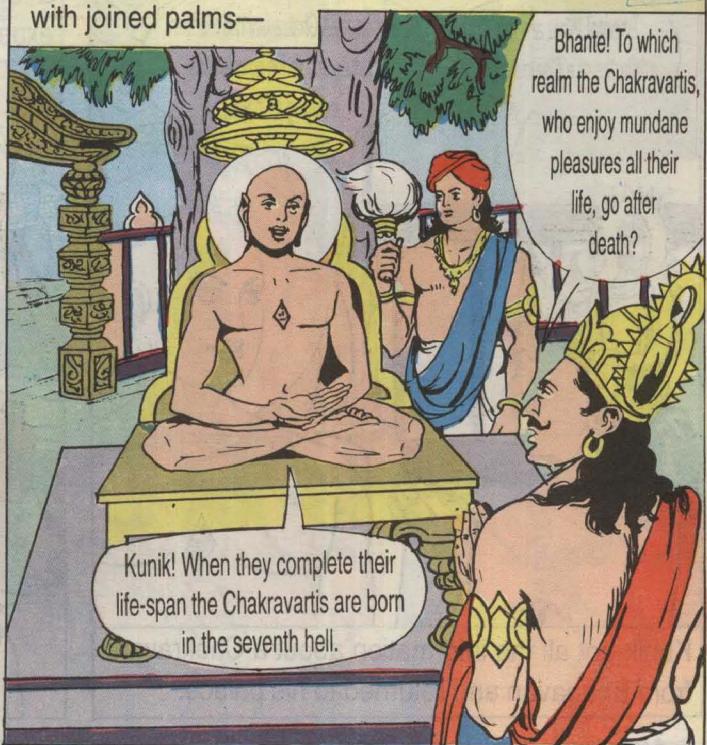
Kunik started preparing for his victory march. One day an attendant informed him—

Sire! Shraman Bhagavan Mahavir has arrived in the Purnabhadra Chaitya in the city.

Great! Bhagavan Mahavir has come. I will go to pay him my homage. #

Next day, after the discourse, Kunik asked Bhagavan with joined palms—

Bhante! To which realm the Chakravartis, who enjoy mundane pleasures all their life, go after death?



Kunik was a great devotee of Bhagavan Mahavir.

Kunik again asked—

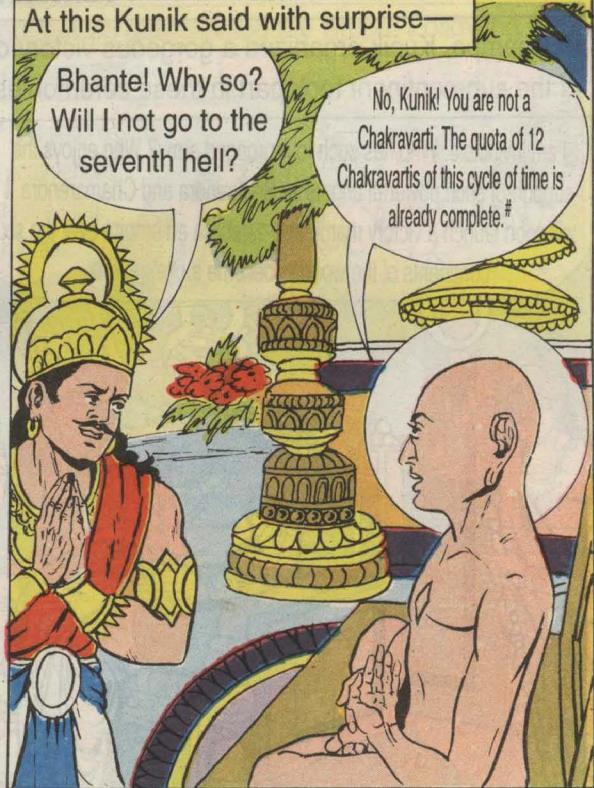
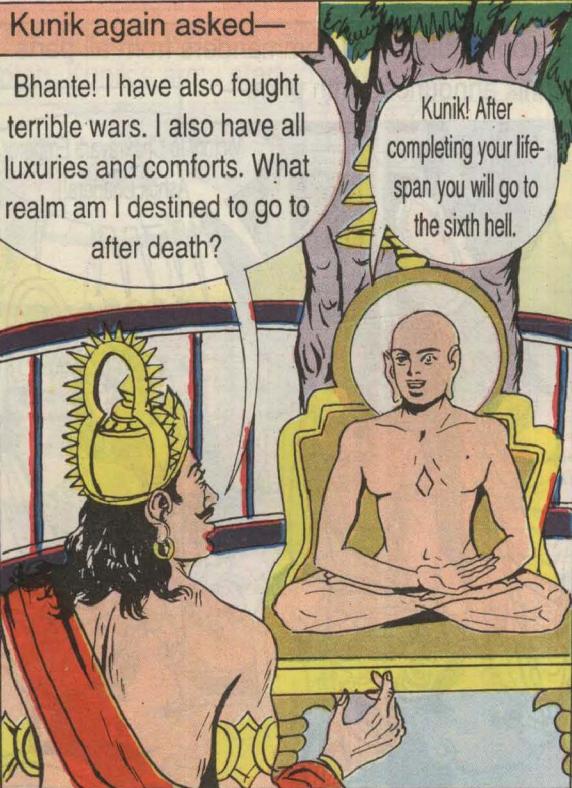
Bhante! I have also fought terrible wars. I also have all luxuries and comforts. What realm am I destined to go to after death?

Kunik! After completing your life-span you will go to the sixth hell.

At this Kunik said with surprise—

Bhante! Why so? Will I not go to the seventh hell?

No, Kunik! You are not a Chakravarti. The quota of 12 Chakravartis of this cycle of time is already complete.#

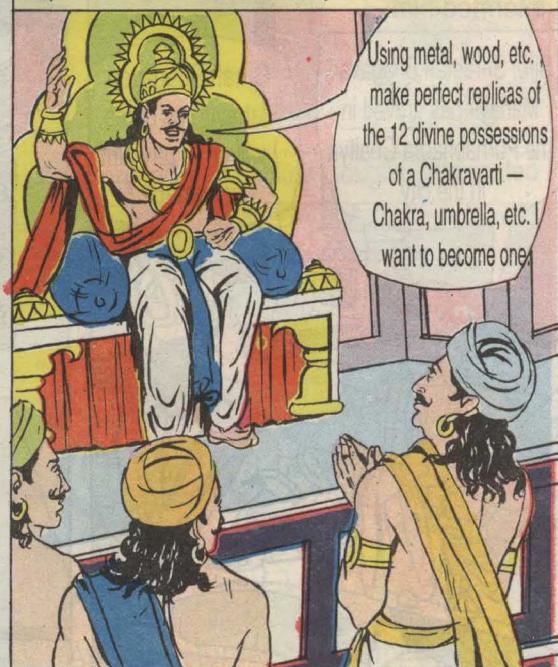


Kunik again asked—

Bhante! What are the attributes of a Chakravarti?

Bhante! What are the attributes of a Chakravarti? A Chakravarti has fourteen Ratnas and divine possessions including a Chakra.

He became obsessed by a desire to become a Chakravarti. Next morning he summoned expert artisans from the city and instructed—

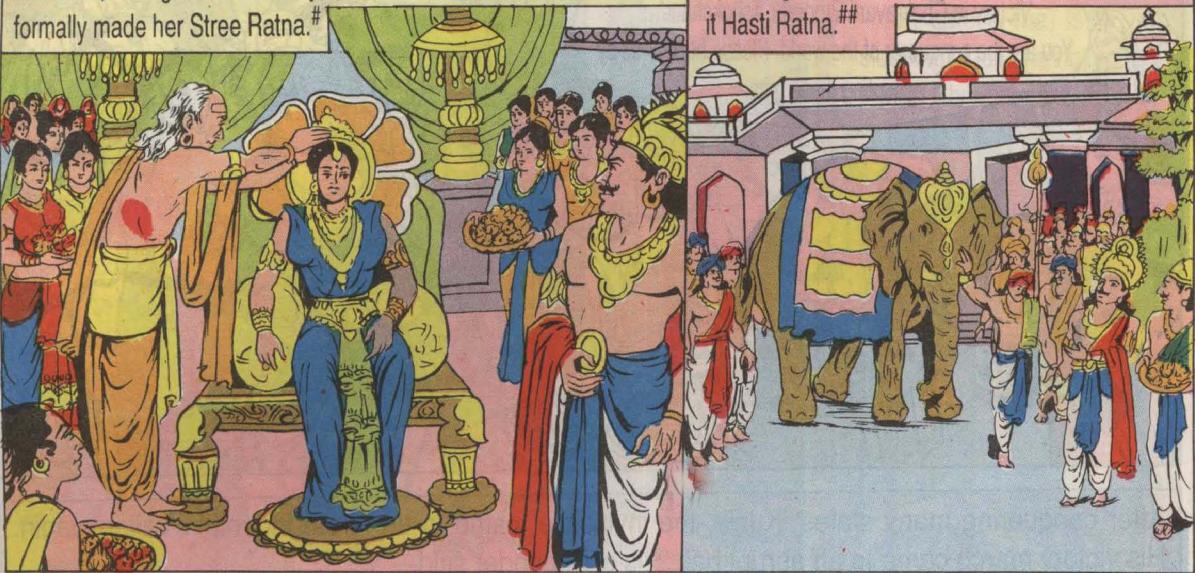


Kunik got all the information about a Chakravarti from Bhagavan and returned to his palace.

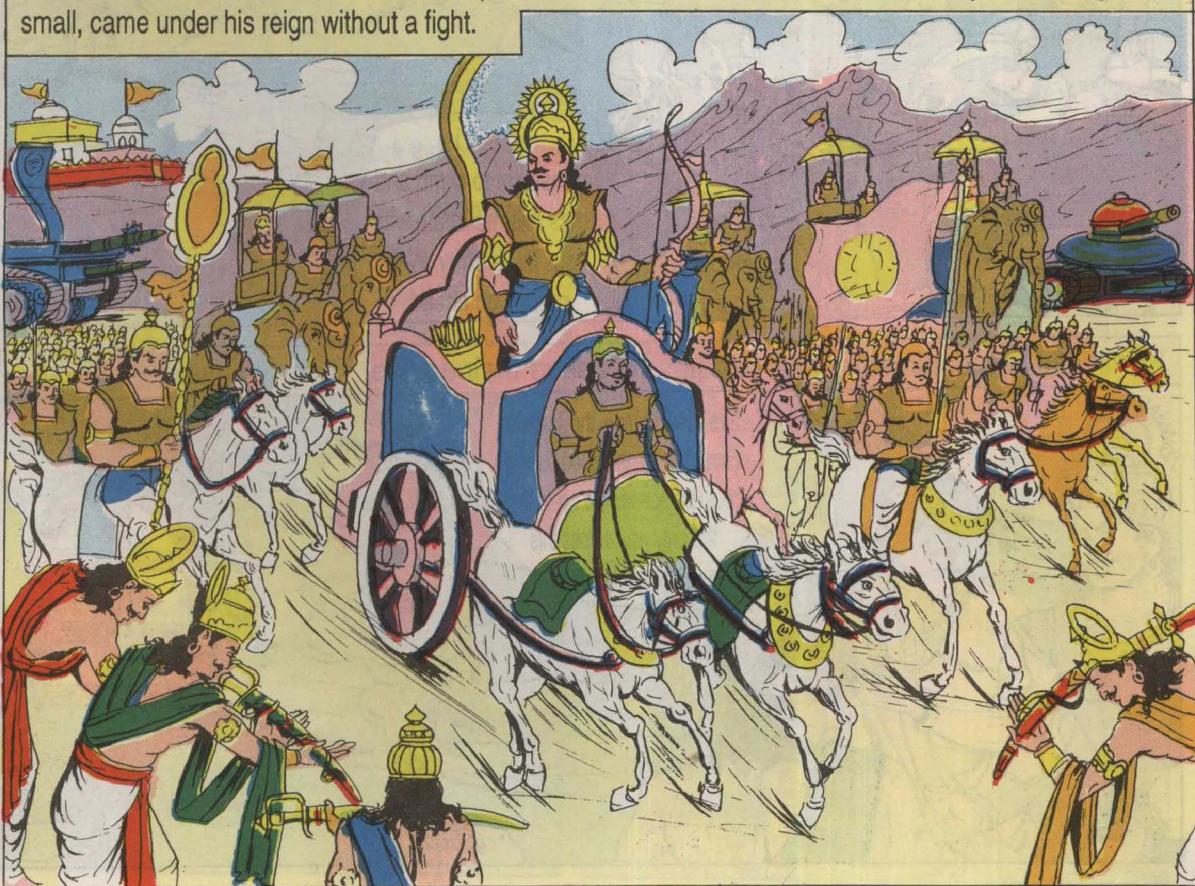
According to the Jain belief there can be only 12 Chakravartis during one descending cycle of time.

After this, in a grand ceremony, he crowned queen Padmavati and formally made her Stree Ratna.#

Selecting the best among his elephants he made it Hasti Ratna.##



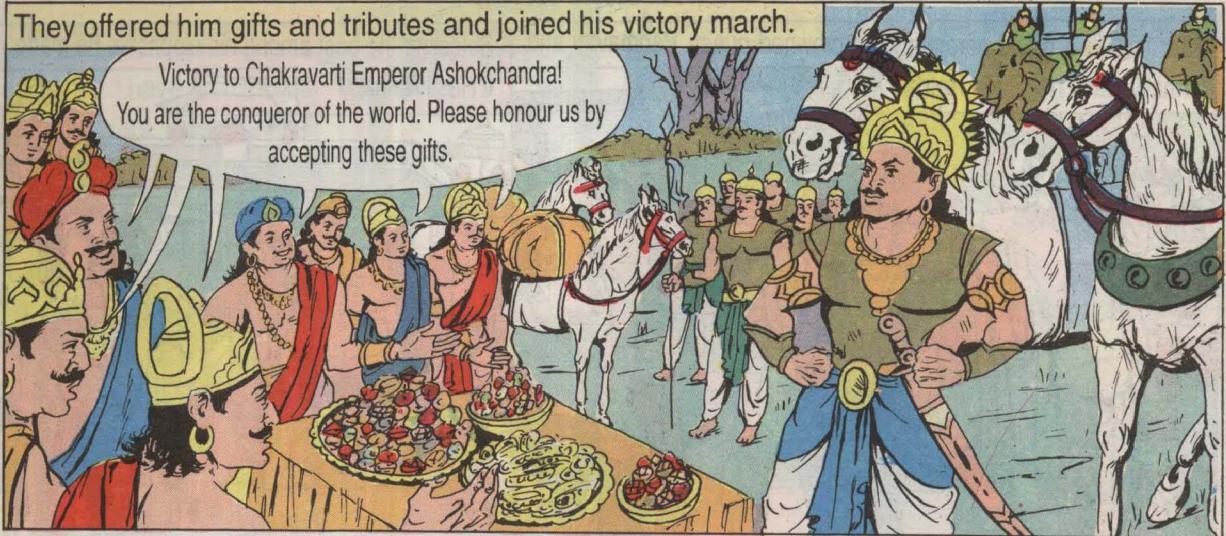
Thus he arranged for the replicas of the fourteen Ratnas* and started his victory march with his large army. As he had the two divine and terrible weapons Rath-musal and Mahashilakantak, many rulers, large and small, came under his reign without a fight.



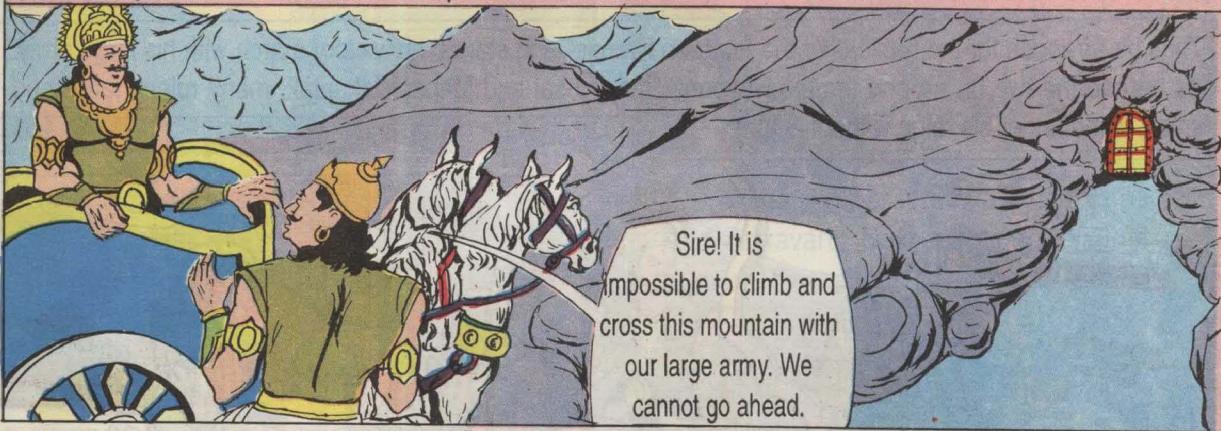
Stree Ratna = gem among women.

##. Hasti Ratna = gem among elephants.

They offered him gifts and tributes and joined his victory march.

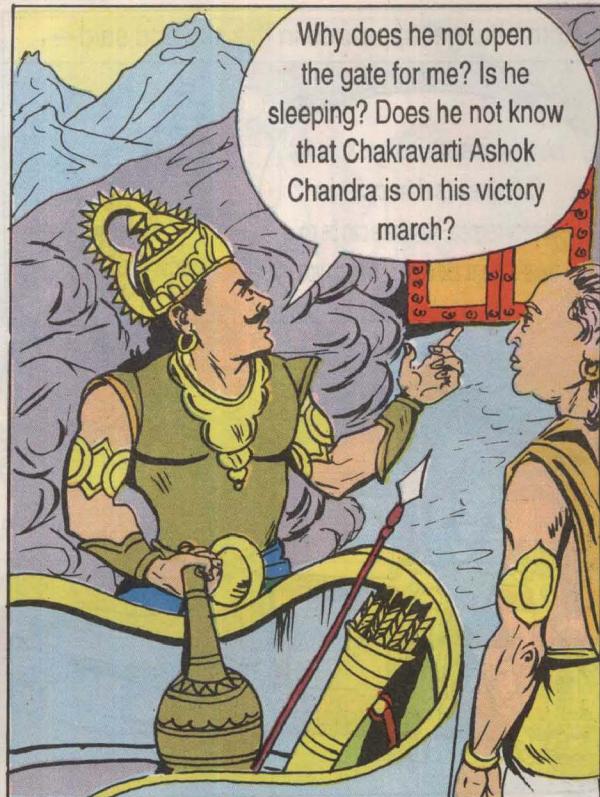
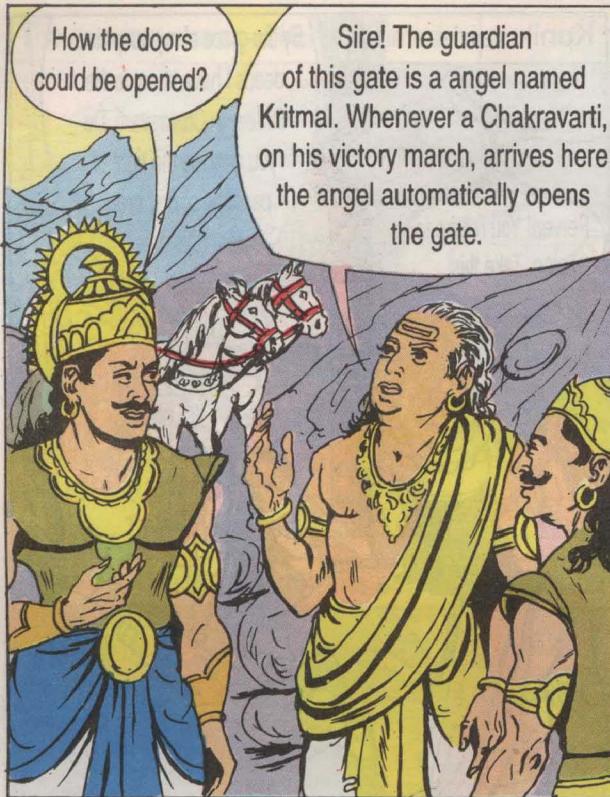


After conquering many states, Kunik, the invincible, came to the great mountain Vaitadhyagiri. His victory march came to an abrupt halt. His commander said—

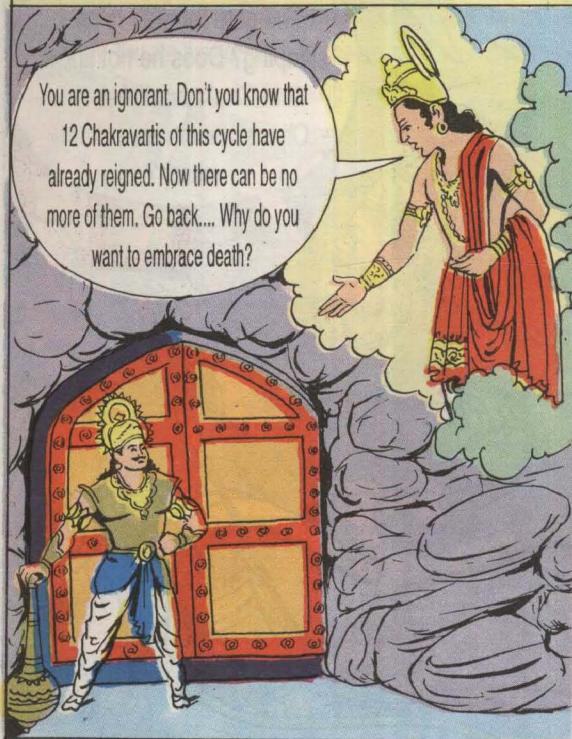


Kunik called his ministers and priests and asked their advise. The priest said—





Kritmal angel appeared in the sky and said—



Kunik said—



The angel threw flames at Kunik and set him afire—

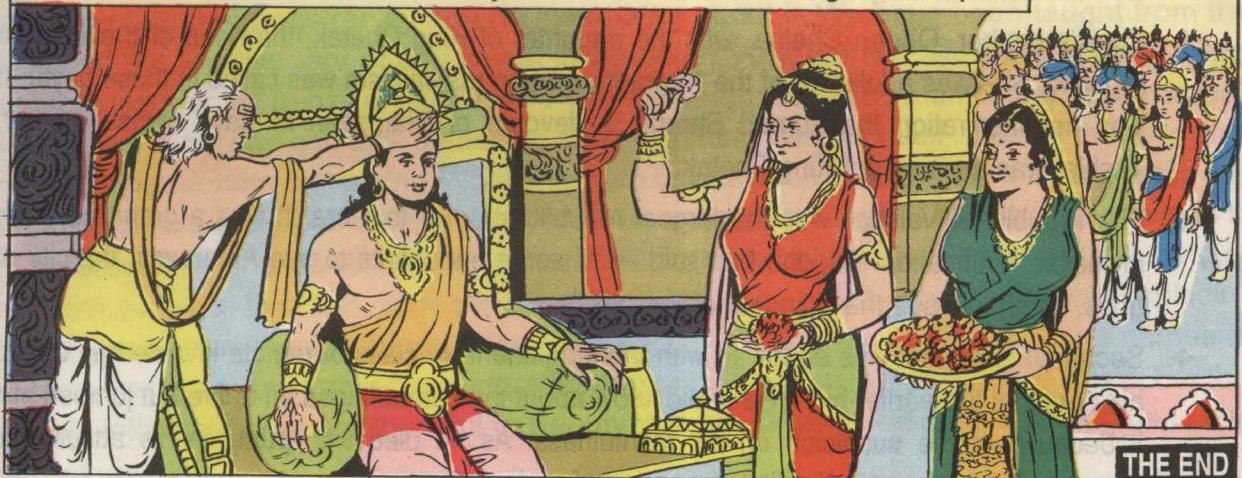


The desolate armies of Kunik returned.



He reincarnated in the sixth hell.

After the death of Kunik his son Udayi was crowned as the king of Champa.



THE END

MORALS LESSONS —

1. Due to the animosity of the earlier birth, Kunik was so much antagonistic to his father Shrenik. A small mistake turned into a disaster. One should always be alert and cautious in his behaviour and never neglect his rightful duty.
2. Blinded by ambition, a man misbehaves even with his parents and tortures them. Therefore ambitions should be controlled with the help of reason.
3. The jealousy and insistence of queen Padmavati forced Kunik to do injustice to his own brothers. Becoming immoral, he destroyed a peaceful city like Vaishali just for the sake of a necklace and an elephant. One should never abandon justice and morality under pressure from others.
4. Over ambitious Kunik did not heed to the warning of Bhagavan Mahavir and tried to become a Chakravarti. His ambition lead him to his end. Ambitions, craving for pleasures, and false pride push one into the abyss of darkness and destruction.

विशेष ज्ञातव्य



- ❖ In the Jain literature Kunik is popularly mentioned as Ashokchandra Kunik. Due to his wounded finger, pecked by a hen, every one called him Kunik (one with a cut finger). In the Jain works he is more often mentioned as Kunik or Konik rather than his full name. In the Buddhist literature his name is Ajatshatru Kunik. Modern historians also know him as Ajatshatru.
- ❖ The available Jain literary evidences indicate that King Kunik was a devout follower of Bhagavan Mahavir. It is mentioned that he had appointed a messenger (Pravrittivaduk) whose only duty was to bring news of Bhagavan Mahavir's well being every morning. Kunik took his breakfast only after this news.
- ❖ Kunik's mother, Queen Chelna, was the daughter of King Chetak, the head of the Vaishali republic. She was a follower of the Nirgranth religion (as Jainism was called in those days). It was her inspiration that turned Shrenik a devotee of Bhagavan Mahavir whose mother, Trishla, was the sister of King Chetak.
- ❖ The republic of Vaishali was the largest republic state of that era. It was a grand city with invincible fortification. Buddha has said — "If some one wants to see Amaravati, the city of gods, he should see the grandeur of Vaishali."
- ❖ Sechanak Elephant was endowed with Vibhang Jnana (a class of remote knowledge) due to his deeds of the earlier birth. He could know about the camouflaged pit of fire but jumped into it because of the suspicion on his faithfulness. As he died with purity in his attitude he reincarnated as a god in the first dimension of gods.
- ❖ The divine necklace of Halla and Vihalla was taken back by the gods. The gods also transported them to the religious assembly of Bhagavan Mahavir. They renounced the world and got initiated.
- ❖ It is mentioned in Avashyak Churni that the combined value of the divine necklace and Sechanak elephant was total that of the whole empire of King Shrenik.
- ❖ Shrenik had ten wives named Kali, Mahakali, Sukali, etc. Every one of them had a son named Kaal, Mahakaal, Sukaal, etc. respectively. These ten brothers were killed by the divine arrows of King Chetak in the war of Vaishali. After their death their mothers got initiated in the order of Bhagavan Mahavir. They did severe penance, the details of which are mentioned in Antakriddasha Sutra. This Agam is specially read during the Paryushan Parva.
- ❖ A lot of information about Kunik is available in Jain scriptures like Bhagavati Sutra, Niryalika, Aupapatik, etc.

Dear friends,

Are you aware that many things we use come from animal abuse and torture ? The food we eat, the clothes we wear, the cosmetics we use have one or more ingredients that come from the suffering of innocent lives. These animals that suffer tremendous pain, are kept out of our sight, imprisoned behind steel gates as they are driven insane, burned, radiated, starved, blinded, bashed, poisoned, experimented and electro shocked for our sheer pleasure. These birds and beasts speak to us, but we fail to understand them. Their cries and pitiful eyes complain of their suffering, but we turn deaf ears and blind eyes to their pain. With all this agony around is it possible to experience peace in the world ? Their cries and curses, their sighs and sorrows will not follow us like a shadow ? The violence inflicted towards these dumb creatures will not bring us unhappiness ? Seldom do we think of these consequences, and we continue to pursue our greed passionately.

We all know that what we give out comes about. What we sow that we reap. This is the universal law. The law of nature. May be we were not aware of this torture before, but it is time we wake up to the gross reality and do something about it. We have been taught from the childhood not to kill an ant or any tiniest living-being. How can we allow killing of so many harmless lives for the frenzy of our desire ? The answer to these and many other ethical issues lie within us. If, only we can take sometime and get in touch with our self : the self that is loving, that is compassionate that is kind. When this truth dawns upon the mind we will surely stop this barbaric act and change direction towards harmless living. It is rightly said that what we do to the life around us and the environment becomes our fate. Let us change our fate by letting all living-beings live in freedom, in peace and in happiness. To do this we have to start replacing animal products with non-animal alternatives. In this issue we are going to list names of products that are made from animal ingredients along with its non-animal alternatives. For this valuable information we are thankful to Beauty Without Cruelty, India, for allowing us to use there information.



Bristles

Used in manufacturing hair, cosmetic, shaving, shoepolish, clothes, carpet, artist's and wall-painting brushes and tooth brushes.

Brushes used by painters are made from hog bristles : domestic pigs are chased, brutally caught, and as they squeal in agony, forcibly held underfoot while their hair is yanked out. Killed wildboar and mongoose, both protected wildlife are other sources of animal bristles. In certain countries, sable are specially bred on so-called farms, to be killed and their hair is converted into artist's and cosmetic brushes.

An alternative to bristles of animal origin are bristles made from nylon and other synthetic fibres, which are increasingly and readily available. Apart from being cruelty-free, they are of better quality and last much longer.



Butterflies and Scorpions

Used in jewellery, paperweights and showpieces.

Butterflies and scorpions are caught and immersed alive in resin and plastic to make *kitsch*. Such frivolous ornaments are then usually sold to tourists at high prices, who fail to grasp the intense cruelty involved in mummifying these live, delicate creatures.

Absolutely unnecessary, there is no alternative !

Feathers and Down

Used in making showpieces, fans, hats, accessories, brushes, greeting cards, shuttlecocks and stuffing pillows, cushions, quilts, duvets, sleeping bags, bedding and clothing.

The feathers are plucked cruelly from live birds. The sale of feathers also results in making the meat of birds as chicken, duck, geese, peacock, ostrich etc. more profitable.

Cotton, silk-cotton (from the tree) and synthetic filling materials are good replacements for feathers and down, all of which are readily and widely available.

Fur and Pelt

Used for coats, caps, garments, accessories, trimmings, linings, handbags, showpieces, toys.

Pelts of wild animals, fur and skin are obtained through unimaginably cruel trapping methods. The trapped animal often has to suffer for days, till the trapper comes around on his circuit to end its misery through death. They have to suffer clubbing, gassing, electrocution and strangulation, just to name a few methods. Very often, unwanted animals and birds are also trapped and have to die. Yet others, like rabbits and mink, are specially bred on fur farms, only to be killed for their fur.

Artificial furs, like the coat in the photo, are available. Besides, most importantly, being cruelty-free, they are much more durable and easy to maintain. But do we really need to wear even simulated fur ?



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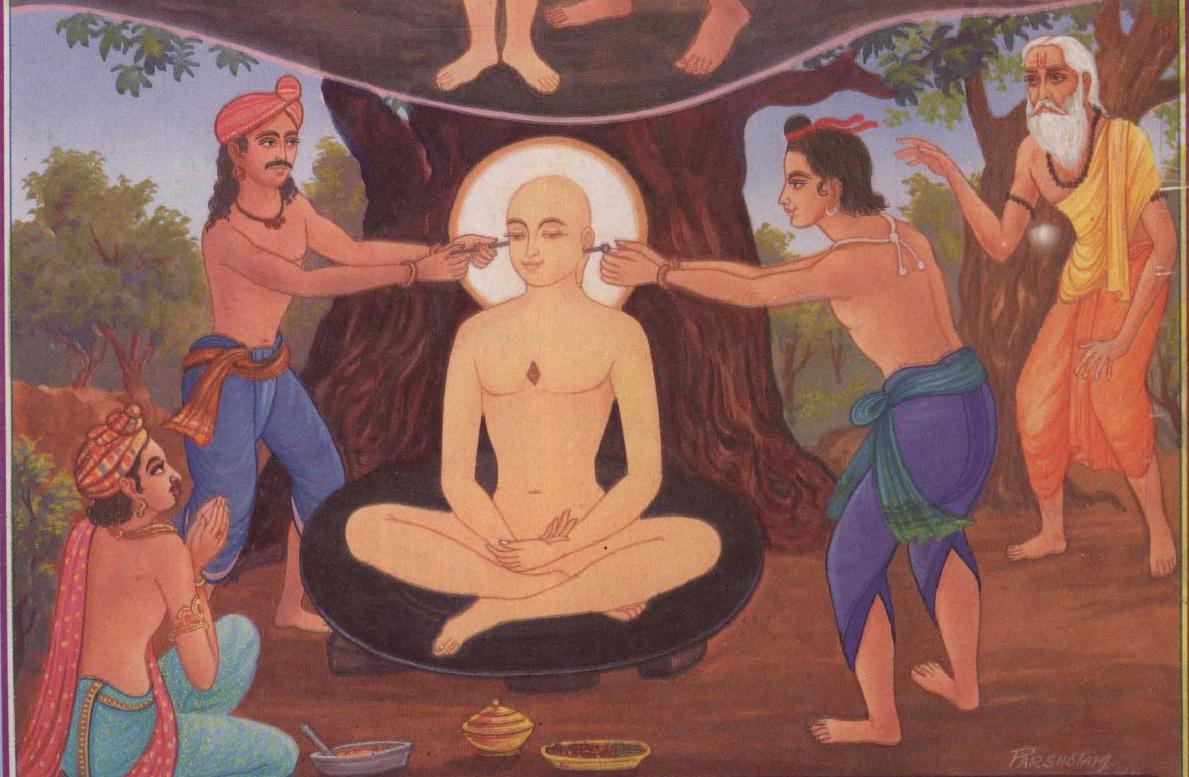
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The last affliction : Nails in the ears and the treatment

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